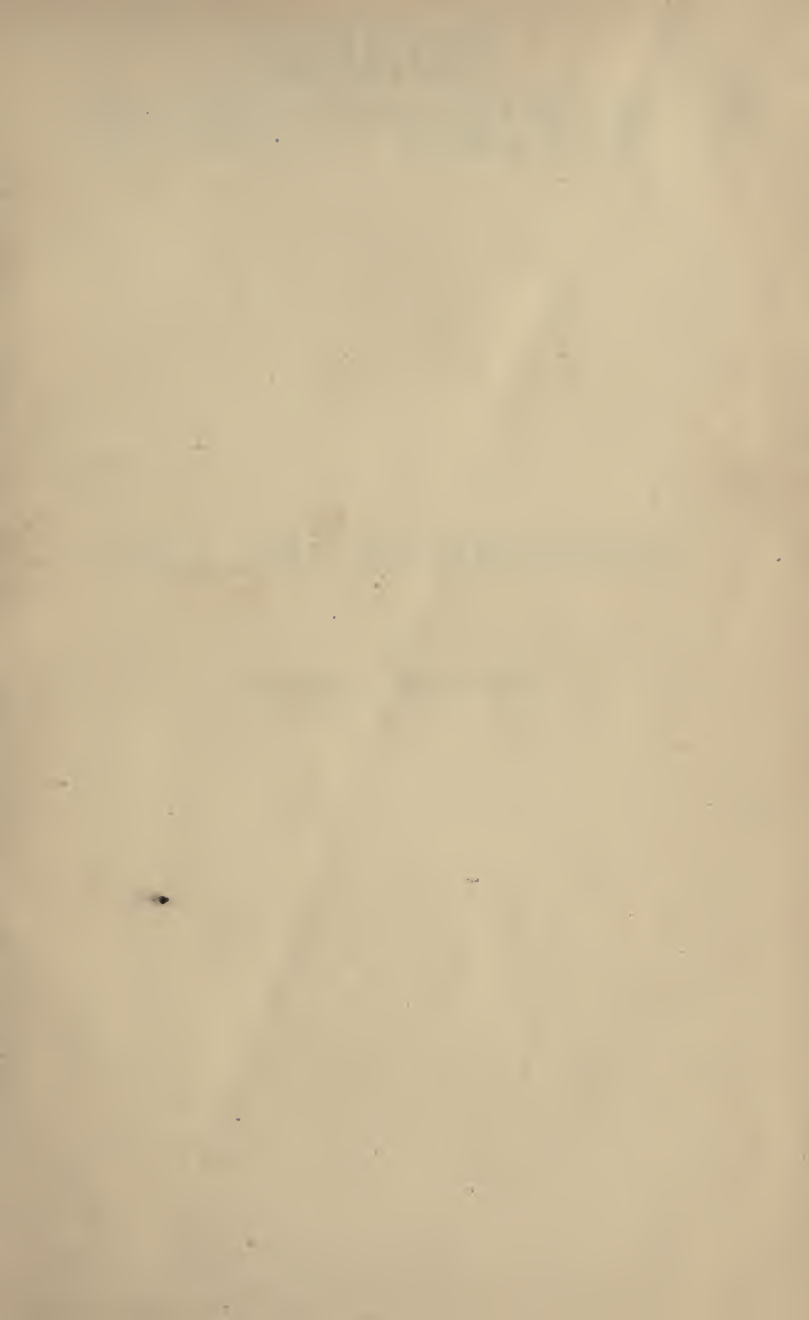




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1892





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THE ART OF READING.

BY  
ERNEST LEGOUVÉ.

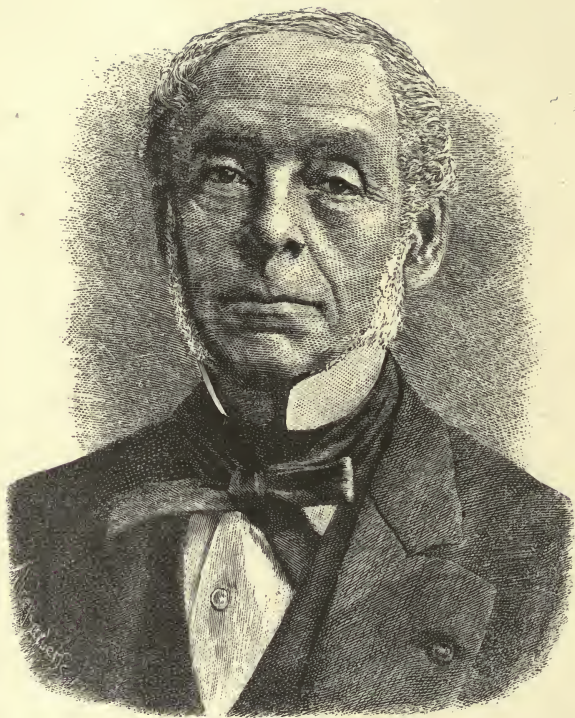
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L. Lyman



THE  
ART OF READING.

BY  
ERNEST LEGOUVÉ,  
OF THE FRENCH ACADEMY.

*Translated, and Illustrated with Copious Notes.*

BY  
EDWARD ROTH.

SECOND EDITION.

PHILADELPHIA:  
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.  
1885.

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ART OF READING

ROBERT L. HODGSON  
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TO THE STUDENTS  
OF THE  
ECOLE NORMALE SUPÉRIEURE.

*Gentlemen :*

*It is for you that this little work has been undertaken ; it is to you it should be dedicated and confided.*

*Pupils to-day, to-morrow you shall be teachers ; to-morrow shall be entrusted to your watchful care generations and generations of the rising hope of France. Countless are the minds that an idea accepted by you shall pervade. Assist me, then, in spreading what you have assisted in producing. To have had you for an audience is already an honor and a pleasure ; let both be doubled by allowing me the favor of saluting you as my fellow-laborers.*

ERNEST LEGOUVÉ.

PARIS, April, 1877.

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## THE TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

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THIS translation, the pleasant employment of the spare hours afforded by a month's sojourn at the sea-side, was ready—Notes and all—four months ago, and announced for immediate publication. But before sending it irrevocably to the printer, I showed the work to a critical friend. He was only half pleased.

“Legouv  ’s chatty, well-bred, Parisian, man of the world confidences on such a subject as Reading,” said he, “to the intelligent community cannot help proving singularly interesting; the translation—except, perhaps, in the ambitious parts—will find few critics; but the Notes are no good.”

“What’s the objection? Are they not reliable?”

“They may be gems of reliability for all I know—I have not tested them. Catch me reading such rubbish as Notes on more than eighty different subjects crowded into ten pages! Of what possible use is the information that Lamartine ‘wrote *Jocelyn*’ and that La Fontaine ‘died in 1695’? As far as giving us a living, tangible idea of either of these men is concerned, you might as well say that one of them did not write *Don Carlos*, and that the other was not slain at the siege of Magdeburg.”

“What do you want?”

“Either no Notes at all or something worth reading.”

“A biographical dictionary? A young Encyclopedia Britannica?”

"Not at all. There should be as little as possible of dictionary or dry compilation about your Notes. They should be something much less but also something much more. Dictionary articles are intended for reference — not reading. Read a man's biography — you have at least some solid idea of his reality. Read the best written biographical notice — it is no doubt full of interesting information, but your conception of the man himself is still little better than that of a colorless phantasm. Notes of any kind to Legouv  's own book, if intended for his exceedingly intelligent hearers, or even for the majority of his French readers, would be, of course, absurd from their inutility. The names that he is continually quoting are as familiar to the ears of his audience as the names of their own fathers. They give pith, point, force, light to his remarks. Every name is a living, breathing essence in those bright young minds. But suppose the Normal scholars knew as little about Voltaire as most of them do about our Brockden Brown or Henry Clay or Longfellow or Forrest, would his sentence borrow much light from a note like this — I quote the first I meet — 'VOLTAIRE, French philosopher, born in 1694, author of 'La Henriade,' etc., etc., etc.; visited England and Prussia, resided at Ferney, died in 1778?' Would that, or even five times the quantity of the same kind of unimpeachable information, conjure up before their imaginations the faintest picture of the witty, sneering, malicious, restless, selfish, conscienceless sprite that kept Europe in such a ferment during the greater half of the eighteenth century? And if it would not, what is the good of such a note?"

"Not much, I admit. I think I'm beginning to understand you, but —"

"But if you want people to relish your translation as his hearers relished Legouv  's lectures, you must try to do for your audience what their opportunities had already done for his. You must —"

"But —"

"I know your objections. Not at all. No enormous volume of more than eighty elaborate magazine articles. Something

far less pretentious, but far more useful. Magazine article constructors generally write to dazzle, or to be admired, or to kill an idle hour; the inevitable padding is therefore venial, if not commendable. But by avoiding padding—in your case an unpardonable crime—without materially swelling the bulk of your volume, you can, by judicious treatment of each subject, excite in your reader's mind such a clear, distinct, and permanent idea of its real nature as may be *quite sufficient for general purposes*. If you keep this constantly in view, you cannot help giving the public a useful book. To those of your readers who have neither the time nor the opportunity of searching for varied information, you will afford an abundant supply in a comparatively small space, nowhere else so accessible. And even the others, who do not really need your notes at all, may not be sorry now and then to have their previous knowledge confirmed, their fading impressions renewed, their wrong notions corrected or combated, and their disputed points perhaps presented in a new light."

My plain-spoken friend had to say a great deal more in the same strain before converting me, but he succeeded at last, his clinching argument—that a month or so would be ample time for the preparation of the new notes—deriving considerable strength from the recollection of what little time and trouble the old ones had cost me.

The courteous reader has the result before him in the Notes at the end of this volume. I do not regret my industry, but I should not willingly undertake such a task again. Indeed, when I began it, I had but a faint conception of its peculiar difficulty. Not that it is really either difficult or tiresome to one that has plenty of time or a fine library at his disposal. But the same inexorable necessity that limited my available time to two or three hours, four evenings every week, compelled me also to spend this time in my own room and among my own books, my collection of which is anything but large, varied, or expensive. The volumes I was obliged to consult, outside those found in the most unpretending of libraries, did not amount to a dozen altogether. All this, rendering

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PROPERTY OF  
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PART I.



PRELIMINARY.



# PROPERTY OF DEPARTMENT OF DRAMATIC ART

## THE ART OF READING.

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### PART I.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### *HOW I LEARNED TO READ.*

IN the great matter of education nothing should be beneath our notice, but the question I am now going to press on your attention derives additional importance from the fact that it is a step forward in the march of our Public Instruction imperatively demanded and not yet even attempted. In the great Republic of North America reading aloud is justly considered to be one of the very first elements of a child's education, a constituent of its basis most urgently insisted on. Here, in France, reading aloud does not reach even the sorry dignity of a diverting art; we affect to regard it as a curiosity, a luxury, often something hardly better than a pretension. This silly prejudice I am desirous of combating. In my opinion, the art of reading should not only be a social acquisition worthy of high estimation, but it should be made one of the most indispensable items of our scholastic curriculum. Towards the furtherance, however slight, of these two most desirable objects, I should be proud and happy to contribute the best effort of my feeble powers.

At the very threshold of our subject we are met by the question, Is reading an art at all? Many doubt it; some deny it. My own opinion I give without the slightest hesitation. A careful study of the question for at least thirty years, aided by numberless and varied experiences, has convinced me that it *is* an art, *a real art, but as difficult as it is real, and as useful as it is difficult.*

This opinion of mine I expect to demonstrate didactically; but, though didactic, and I hope convincing, I do not intend to be tiresome. I intend to demonstrate my proposition in my own way. An abstraction, I have always considered, gains much by being presented in living material forms. I shall therefore, I think, convince you, with less weariness for my audience and greater ease for myself, by detailing, from the very beginning, how this conviction of mine on the subject has been brought about.

Kindly imagine me then for awhile to be one of yourselves relating to a sympathizing companion some of his experiences in a favorite branch of study.

Reading aloud was always a favorite passion of mine — I might even say it had come to me by inheritance. My father<sup>1</sup> is well known to have been one of the most successful readers of his day, I might say one of the ablest professors of the art of elocution in those times. When Mademoiselle Duchesnois<sup>2</sup> made her *debut*, the play-bill ran, “MLLE DUCHESNOIS, M. LEGOUVÉ’S PUPIL.” Does not this little fact, by the by, show that elocution and acting were in those times, if not exactly more respected than they are now, held at least in more general estimation? A member of the French Academy of to-day would hardly have the courage to associate his name with that of an actress on a play-bill. As for me, however, nourished

<sup>1</sup> See Notes at end of the book.

In such traditions, I always felt in my very breath and blood, as it were, an innate love of reading aloud, so enthralling and lasting that it has always been and still is one of my keenest delights. To this instinct also I suppose I must attribute my warm sympathy for artists, with which I have often been taunted as an eccentricity, but of which I hope I shall never be able to completely cure myself. Even in my school-days I had organized in our house a little troop of actors and actresses of my own age, so that our holidays were generally spent in spouting before an audience of our parents and friends whole acts at a time from Racine<sup>3</sup>, Corneille<sup>4</sup>, and Molière<sup>5</sup>. To me all parts came equally acceptable. I played everything: kings, lovers, valets, heavy fathers, old *Horatius*, *Alcestes*, *Clitander*, *Augustus*. Nothing could daunt my eighteen years. I am not so sure even that, in imitation of the ancient stage, I did not venture now and then to represent some tragic princess who declaimed tragic verses—that to me was sufficient attraction. All this was, I don't deny, both in "action and utterance," terribly crude and unequal, fully as bombastic and spasmodic as you would wish to hear. My voice, scarcely formed, grew so husky that towards the end of the piece I could hardly make myself heard. Still, in the very heart of all this bubbling and frothing, there was a genuine stock of sincerity, a fund of unfeigned emotions that kept alive in my heart the healthy fervor of honest admiration.

I had hardly left college when a fortunate accident enabled me to form the acquaintance of an eminent elocutionist.

Before reading at the Conservatory<sup>6</sup>, to an assemblage of the Philotechnic Society, *The Two Mothers*, one of my first ventures in poetry, I read the piece to my guardian, M. Bouilly<sup>7</sup>, who contented himself with saying drily:

"Dear boy, you are hardly doing justice to your goods. Better call on my friend Febvé, and get him to give you a few lessons."

I called on Febvé, and my eyes were soon opened. I learned—what I had never suspected—that elocution has a special syntax, and even an orthography of its own. To this valuable discovery, Febvé added a bit of advice that I have never since forgotten.

"The auditorium of the Conservatory," said he, "resembles an excellent Stradivarius<sup>8</sup>. No violin surpasses it in harmonious resonance. The sounds that you send forth are returned to you by its melodious walls fuller, rounder, softer. Your voice can play on these walls as your fingers play on the keys of a fine musical instrument. Be very careful therefore to avoid too high a pitch. And lay down this rule as a principle: *Always adapt and proportion your voice not only to the size of the hall in which you speak, but also to its acoustic properties.*"

Febvé was my first master, my second was—my profession. As dramatic author, I was continually brought into close contact with that class of artists for whom the art of saying a thing well is the first, and in fact the indispensable, requisite of success—play-actors. My successive productions enabled me to see how the most celebrated tragic and comic interpreters of the day used to work: Samson<sup>9</sup>, Provost<sup>10</sup>, Regnier<sup>11</sup>, Got<sup>12</sup>, Delaunay<sup>13</sup>. I questioned them. I studied them. I labored with them. Every day I saw them put into actual practice every requirement of tone and action imperiously demanded for the successful management of the voice. They showed me how much calculation, reasoning, science even, was necessary for deciding on a certain inflexion, for selecting a certain accent.



Finally, another of Fortune's smiles gave me the opportunity of laboring intimately and conjointly with three famous women, certainly the three most illustrious actresses of the last forty years: Mademoiselle Mars<sup>14</sup>, Mademoiselle Rachel<sup>15</sup>, and Madame Ristori<sup>16</sup>.

*Louise de Lignerolles*, my first dramatic work and Mademoiselle Mars' last creation but one, required no less than sixty-eight rehearsals before it was allowed to appear on the stage. I was present the whole time, three months. I found it a good school, a rough because a real school. The Mars had a gift of mimicry of wonderful service to her taste for mockery and her irrepressible love of fun. In spite of some qualities as reader and elocutionist, I was still very inexperienced, and, like young men in general, rather given to emphasis. But in my directions to the actors, the instant an inflexion any way declamatory escaped me, that instant it was reproduced by Mademoiselle with a striking exactness, but also with a *leetle* point of caricature that made it irresistibly ludicrous. I reddened with mortification, of course, but I had the good sense to keep my anger to myself, quietly saying: "This is your lesson, my boy; better take it, and make the most of it."

One day my lesson was really an admirable one. The moment the Mars appeared everybody could see that she looked fatigued, rather absent-minded, and little disposed to surrender herself completely to her part. At the beginning of the second act comes a scene demanding a good deal of energy. Mademoiselle got through it all with a low voice, almost without a motion; still, not a single effect, not a single point, not a single fine shade of the sentiment was left unexpressed or neglected. They were all there, beautifully brought out, made perfectly visible. It was a highly-finished picture seen in a dim light; it was

a fine piece of music softened, perhaps sweetened, certainly not deadened, by the distance ; it was a pastel, somewhat faded by time, but one in which every tone still preserved its just shade, every contour its just line, and every figure its just relation and complete measure. It was quite a new revelation to me. I began now to understand on what broad foundations the art of elocution must rest. Here was an artist who, just as we turn down the gas without destroying the light, almost completely extinguished her part without losing a particle of its proportions, of its completeness, of its relief.

Rachel's name is linked indissolubly with a whole morning's serious labor, the memory of which I shall never forget. The piece was still *Louise de Lignerolles*, which Rachel wished to play after Mars' retirement. In one scene there is a somewhat remarkable passage, containing at most but thirty lines ; but to these thirty lines Mademoiselle and myself devoted no less than three hours' hard, incessant study. Never before had the power of concentrated attention, the fineness of keen appreciation, and the modest but overwhelming sincerity of this truly admirable artist so astounded me, so enchanted me ! It was a splendid lesson for mutual instruction. With what ardor we both set ourselves to work at the rude task !

The great point to be gained was that Rachel was not to fall behind her immortal predecessor, and to reach such a point no labor should be spared. Not a single one of these three to four hundred words that we did not examine, inspect, turn this way, that way, every way, to discover the true, living, and penetrating accent. Three such hours are worth whole months of ordinary labor.

A singular circumstance, in connection with Ristori, advanced me another step.



My tragedy of *Medea* had led to my acquaintance with this famous lady. Our common success ripened this acquaintance into friendship.

Some time after the death of Rachel, Thierry, the able and accomplished manager of the *Théâtre-Français*, took it into his head to organize an entertainment for the benefit of Racine's granddaughter, a poor old lady, in fact very far advanced in years and in very straitened circumstances. Well aware of what strong additional attraction would be gained by the appearance of Madame Ristori's name on the play-bill, he came and asked me to write in prose, and of course in French, a few paragraphs to be translated into Italian verse for recitation by the great Italian actress. Setting myself at once to work, I soon accomplished my task, only, when all was done, I discovered that my efforts, instead of confining themselves to humble prose, had bloomed out into poetry. But, nowise disconcerted, I hastened that very evening to Madame Ristori's, acquainted her with Thierry's very natural request, which she accepted and approved with delight, and then presented her with my manuscript.

"Just read that," said I.

"What? These French verses?"

"Yes."

"Aloud?"

"Yes."

"Why so?"

"Because these are the verses which you are to recite."

"On the stage!" cried Madame, hastily quitting her chair. "French verses by me! In the theatre! You must be my enemy! You want to have me hissed!"

"Calm yourself, my dear lady. Keep cool. He that nisses you hisses me. Our interests are identical. Have

the kindness then to resume your chair and read these verses."

My tranquillity and self-assurance calmed her — a little. She began the lines somewhat restively, but after awhile she began again and got through quite passably.

"Well?" asked Madame, after a little pause.

"Well, have the goodness to read those lines over again. I have not yet quite made up my mind."

She read them over again.

"All right!" exclaimed I, with a look of great determination. "Now then to work!"

The very next day I brought Regnier to listen to her performance, for I did not like trusting too much to my own impressions. The day after, I brought Samson. A week later, Ristori recited these verses, in French, on the stage of the *Théâtre-Français*, with so much correctness, grace, and effect, that Samson did not hesitate to say to two young actresses, pupils of his:

"Young ladies, take a lesson!"

Had the illustrious Italian *tragédienne* completely got rid of her Italian accent? Not at all. Was Dante's mellifluous language still heard resounding among the French rhymes? Most undoubtedly it was. But Madame's fine talent covered up everything, and her success actually so much surprised and pleased me that I undertook to write a play for her in French: *Beatrice, or the Madonna of Art*.

The undertaking was perilous. The risk I encountered was the worst of all risks — the risk of making myself ridiculous. But I knew Ristori, and relied on her. As soon as the work was completed, I joined her in Florence; and there, for a full month, I taught her how to repeat her part, line by line, word by word, syllable by syllable.

How? Only listen.

Two radical distinctions separate the Italian and the French languages: one, of sound; the other, of accent. The Italians have no *e* mute. The Italians pronounce the *u*, not in the French way, but like the English *oo*; as for the French diphthong *eu*, they have nothing like it at all. Besides, the French *a*, the French *o*, and particularly the French *e*, have intermediate shades of sound that are never completely indicated by the French accents, whether acute, grave, or circumflex. How is it possible, for instance, to make a foreigner understand that the *e* in *cette* is neither as open as in *tête*, nor as sonorous as in *colère*, nor as sharp as in *bétail*?

Accentuation presents even graver difficulties. The Italian language is rich and varied in accentuation; the French very poor. We Frenchmen like to glide over the syllables, hardly resting on any except the last; whereas, to an Italian ear the value of the accent, the place of the accent, possesses a very decided, indeed, an almost indispensable, charm. How to rid my interpreter of her strong inbred tendency to accentuate? How accustom her, for instance, to skim lightly over the first three syllables of *Semiramis*, dwelling only on the last one, when in *Se-mi-rá-mi-de*, the sonorous Italian word of five syllables, the *ra* makes itself heard with so much roundness and force?

After some careful reflection, I wrote out *Beatrice's* part in strong, heavy letters, on lines pretty far apart. These letters I then marked with three kinds of signs in red ink. The first consisted of lines drawn up and down or vertically; the second were curves drawn all along the word or longitudinally; while the third were marks placed *over* the syllables, pretty much as the dactyls and spondees are marked in our school prosodies.

The object of the vertical or up and down lines was to

kill, to utterly annihilate all the *e* mutes, that is, all the *e*'s which the French never pronounce, but which the Italians always feel strongly disposed to pronounce. For example, in the phrase, *Madame, faites-moi le plaisir*, the up and down lines would kill the final *e* of *Madame*, the *e* of *faites-moi*, and the *e* of *le plaisir*.

The longitudinal and curved lines, starting from the first syllable and pouncing plumb on the last, said plainly and distinctly: "Hurry up, hurry up! don't lag on the way!" Every instant, Madame's Italian instinct would fain dwell on some particularly trying part of the word, but the inflexible red curve was there! "Go on! go on! push on to the 'accent!'"

Finally, the marks placed over the vowels whose intermediary sounds do not exist in Italian, recalled to her eyes, by a characteristic sign, some particular intonation, with which I had already made her ears and tongue quite familiar.

By this simple method, thanks to the musical annotation, thanks to several weeks' pretty hard work, but thanks particularly to the wonderful intelligence and the still more wonderful *grit* of the artist—a fighting artist, I used to call her—we at last succeeded, not in depriving an elegant Italian lady of her Italian accent—that I never expected nor even attempted—but in leaving her, so to speak, no more than its savor, its aroma, just enough to render her speech strange but pleasant, quaint but far from ridiculous—in short, piquant, interesting, and decidedly charming.

You see that I had by this time exchanged the *rôle* of pupil for that of master. It was a new but most important step on the road of self-instruction. Teaching is perhaps the best possible way of learning. A dramatic author can-

not help, in fact, becoming a teacher of elocution. His interpreters are often nothing better than inexperienced beginners, with little in their favor beyond a pretty face or a pretty voice. No matter for that; they are to such an extent the material part of his ideal personages, the tangible clothing of his conceptions, that he must take them just as they are, without ever thinking of exchanging them for others. He must face the difficult task of breathing a soul into these pretty statues. Every new idea becomes a new lesson, and the greater the number of ideas the harder the work.

Besides, there comes a day, resuming every old experience and preceding every new, when the dramatic author is actually thrown on himself, when he speaks by himself, when he teaches by his own unaided resources—the day when he reads his piece for the committee by whom it is to be judged and the players by whom he expects it to be acted. An important and difficult matter! His task is to make his idea understood, to turn it into a living, comprehensible essence. The fate of his work lies in his own hands, or rather in his own voice. Will it be accepted or refused? Will it fail or succeed? The answer to these important questions depends in a very great measure indeed on how he accomplishes his task. Reading it, is, in fact, the first performance of his work, only without costume, or scenery, or actors, and with all the parts to be represented by one single individual.

Reading a play, and taking a part in it, are two very different things. The actor has but one *rôle* to represent; the reader represents them all. The actor is a single musician taking his part in the orchestra; the reader is the whole orchestra itself. He must bring out in succession every age, every sentiment; every moment he must change



his voice, his look, his movement; and the impression which he desires to produce being above all things an impression complete and distinct, though evanescent, he must give every character its full value, but no more than its full value; he must assign every character its own place, and keep it there; in short, by his fleeting words he must succeed in raising up before the imagination of the audience a new picture, but complete, living, and striking!

In fact, I know of no task more difficult, no feat more trying, and, considering that I have had fully forty years' incessant converse and intercourse with the most eminent artists of our day, I think you will acknowledge that, in delivering this opinion, I can flatter myself with the idea that I ought to know something touching the subject.

Lastly, my third and concluding teacher was the Collège de France<sup>17</sup>, where, in 1848, I delivered a course of lectures on the *Moral History of Woman*, and another in 1866, on *Parents and Children in the Nineteenth Century*. There I was brought for the first time into direct and uninterrupted contact with the great public; there I learned both the rules imposed and the resources furnished by the presence of a numerous audience; and there I completed my education. Not that I mean to say, either, that I was then or am now anything like a real master in the art of reading. I have known artists, Samson among the rest, possessing too many claims to this title to permit me to advance any such pretensions. I simply mean that I had studied my course, taken my degree, and was now bachelor of the science. Then the very natural idea occurred to me that I should write my thesis. In other words, I thought I might render some service to the public in general by collecting together and issuing all these scattered

and desultory observations of mine, not, of course, in the shape of a scientific treatise, but in a little pamphlet, not altogether indeed without order, and perhaps occasionally even rather bordering on the didactic, but still rather recalling the familiarity of a lecture than aspiring to the dignity and stateliness of a book.

The project once formed in my mind, my next step was to go and talk it over with a friend.

## CHAPTER II.

### *MUST WE READ AS WE SPEAK?*

IT was the spring of 1868. A few miles from my place I lived Saint-Marc Girardin<sup>18</sup>, the very kind of a man to whom to apply Madame de Sevigné's<sup>19</sup> saying regarding Montaigne<sup>20</sup>: "What a splendid country neighbor he would have made!" In fact he presented the curious contrast of the coolest of heads combined with a singularly warm heart. A tenderer friend I never knew, nor a safer adviser, nor a more delightful talker. Liberty complete in his conversation! Freedom unquestioned and supreme! His good sense always assumed the shape of playful fun, and as for dry, caustic humor, he liked it even in others, and relished it perhaps most when turned against himself. It must be acknowledged, however, that in repartee he was inexhaustible; very little he got that he did not return with heavy interest.

To Girardin then I submitted my idea. He listened to me seriously and attentively, and then said:

"On such a *motif* you certainly can execute many brilliant variations, a multitude of bravura airs that will be sure to bring down the house. But as to your likelihood of giving serious, useful lessons on such a subject, I should decidedly say no. Reading is no art. It is nothing more than the natural exercise of a natural organ. Some people are good readers; some are bad readers. But the talent of the first is nothing more than a gift, a charm, a quality;



it is in fact everything but an art. Good reading is not a thing to be learned. Of course I don't mean to deny that the exercise of this natural gift will not suggest some useful rules: *physical rules*, don't speak too much or read too much, as we must not walk too much or eat too much; *common sense rules*, don't read too loud, or read too low, or read too fast, or read too slow; *taste and modesty rules*, don't read what you do not understand, and if you do understand it, try to make your hearers understand it. But beyond such general, summary, common-place instructions as these, which could all be easily comprised in a few lines, I can find in reading none of those clear, precise, tangible rules, founded on principles, which constitute an art. The whole *art* of Reading, in fact, lies in a nutshell: *read as you speak!*"

For Saint-Marc Girardin's taste I always entertained the greatest respect, and with his rare sincerity I was well acquainted. But on this particular subject I was fully convinced of the correctness of my own opinion. Besides, underneath all this fluent and confident criticism I heard a certain little sentence continually resounding. He never said this little sentence in words to me; most probably he never said it in words to himself; no matter, there it was, bubbling up bright and clear through the transparent flow of his language: "The fact of the matter is, I, Saint-Marc Girardin, read well though I never learned to read; therefore, learning to read is useless."

My reply was somewhat as follows:

"Dear friend, there is no denying that there is some truth in what you say, as there must be some truth in everything said by all men of wit, even on subjects which they have never studied. Now, though a Professor at the Sorbonne<sup>21</sup>, you are nothing more than a man of wit on the

present question. You talk in a lively and pleasant manner on a subject concerning which you know really very little."

I saw him wince slightly at this; the professional ears were not accustomed to such free language.

I quietly resumed :

"That to be a good reader some natural gift is required, cannot be questioned; and certainly reading is not one of those arts or trades that are emphatically closed to you forever if a careful apprenticeship has not initiated your youthful years into their mysteries. That several readers who have never seriously studied the subject, read with grace and can even give pleasure to their hearers, is equally incontestable. Of this you are a living proof yourself. You produce an *effect*; you are always applauded; still you don't read well—excuse the freedom—but really you are by no means a good reader."

Here he smiled knowingly and quite complacently.

"Hah! I'm not a good reader, eh?"

"Far from it; and the proof is that if anybody else read exactly like you he would be a bad reader."

"Explain that riddle, won't you?" he observed, with a laugh.

"Nothing simpler. In your course of lectures at the Sorbonne I heard you read pieces from Lamartine, from Corneille, from Victor Hugo; and at the French Academy<sup>22</sup> I heard you read some of your own discourses. The difference was very great."

"In what respect?" he asked, looking a little puzzled.

"In this: the verses of our great poets, as read by you, were very much applauded. Why so? Because you inspired your reading with much of your superior intelligence, learning, and wit; because you read with a clear,

vibrating, far-reaching voice; because you read with an air of conviction. But all these were personal qualities of your own which almost completely concealed your defects."

"My defects! What were they, pray?"

"Well, your voice has notes that when at a high pitch are a little harsh. Your delivery is sometimes rather declamatory and emphatic — young ears, I don't deny, rather like a little ranting. But just change your audience. Or rather give your manner to somebody who has that and nothing else, neither your wit, nor your superiority, nor your authority. The more successfully he imitates you, the less likely he will be to please. Now nothing is really and substantially good except what can be imitated without danger. That is the final test. You read, therefore, with talent, no doubt, but you do not read like a good reader."

"Not even my own discourses?"

"Ah! your own discourses! These nobody else can read as you do."

"How is that? Are not my defects ——?"

"In reading your own discourses, your very defects are your first requisites of success. They form a portion of your own individuality! A single instance will make my meaning clear. Jules Sandeau<sup>23</sup> asked me to read in public a charming reply which he had written to Camille Doucet<sup>24</sup>. 'I will do nothing of the kind,' replied I. 'Why not?' he asked, 'you read so much better.' 'Yes,' was my answer, 'but that particular piece of yours I should not read half so well; your discourse is yourself. In reading it, I certainly should not commit the faults that you will commit. I should not drop my breath at the last syllable. I should try to bring out the strong points with higher relief. But that unstudied attitude of yours I could

never catch, nor that indolent voice, nor that touch-me-not air, nor that easy-going indifference, all of which complete the effect of your words by producing your personality—which are so charming in you, because they are so delightfully natural, but which would be absolutely displeasing in me as too unnatural, too studied, and too far-fetched. Your discourse is a plump discourse, blooming and blond; I should read it like a man who is thin, sallow, and dark. Read it yourself!’ Sandeau believed me, and his success showed him that I was quite right. But if he had read any one else’s discourse in the same style as he read his own, he would be a traitor.”

“The anecdote is rather pretty,” observed Girardin, “but I don’t exactly see where it takes us to. I understand exactly what you say, but I don’t understand what consequences you wish to draw.”

“Another illustration will make it all as plain as a pike-staff. Viennet<sup>25</sup>, as you know, enjoyed quite a reputation as a reader, a reputation well deserved, I admit, as long as he read his own verses. His hoarse voice, his rough gesticulations by which no doubt he imagined he showed his independence, his little tuft of hair sticking out of the top of his head like the comb of a cock, and his jovial intonations, were all the exact representation of his peculiar talents, lively certainly, but a little coarse. Add to this, he took the greatest possible pleasure in his own productions, and nobody admired Viennet more than Viennet himself. All this, as you may very well suppose, gave his delivery, whenever he read his own verses, a glow, a heat, a fire that carried away the audience. I was asked one day to read some verses of Viennet’s at the Academy. I refused point-blank. ‘Neither myself,’ I observed, ‘nor the poem could have the least chance of success. I should fail in one of

Viennet's most indispensable elements — namely, the profound conviction that what I was reading was a masterpiece."

This harmless little sally made Girardin laugh, and he added gaily :

"But the conclusion? What conclusion do you draw from all this?"

"I conclude that we must not call a reader a good reader merely because he is applauded in reading his own productions — where often his very faults as a reader contribute most decidedly to his success — the man being, as it were, thrown in with the discourse. I conclude also that we must exclude altogether certain choice natures, certain exceptional organizations, such as yours for instance, which can dispense with rules, overleaping them as they do by their innate strength and grace! 'Rules of art are not necessary for us;' they can truly say to themselves, 'we don't need them.' But I conclude, in the third place, that ordinary humanity, the majority, the masses, *must* learn to read in order to know how to read, and that the art of reading is not only indispensable to *them*, but also highly useful to superior humanity, for even yourself, my dear friend, would require a little more science if you had a little less talent."

"But this science — what does it consist in? How is it defined? Express the whole thing in a few words."

"The art of speaking and reading correctly."

"Correctly! Such a term implies rules. What are these rules?"

"These rules are of two kinds, the material and the intellectual. For we must never forget that the art of reading relies at once and just as much on the correct exercise of a physical organ — the voice — as well as on that of a



spiritual organ — thought. Now, suppose we study the voice a little, to begin with?"

"I shall be delighted!" replies Girardin.

"Well, I shall write out my observations on the voice with some care — here we require preciseness, you know — and as soon as they are ready you shall hear me read them."

Alas! the breaking out of the war interfered with our projects. I wrote out nothing; I read nothing for my friend; and it is only a few months ago that, at the request of Monsieur Bersot<sup>26</sup>, one of the chief pillars in our system of public instruction, I wrote out for the pupils of the Normal School this hurried *résumé* of my own experiences.

# PROPERTY OF DEPARTMENT OF DRAMATIC ART

## CHAPTER III.

### *THE VOICE.*

THE physical part of the art of reading embraces two objects: (1) the voice and the pronunciation; (2) the sounds or words.

The organ of the voice, similar in some respect to the organs of sight and of hearing, differs from both in several important particulars. The operations of seeing and of hearing may be said to be results of involuntary acts. Our eyes once open to the light, our ears once open to sound, we see and we hear as a matter of course and almost in spite of ourselves. Our voice organ, on the contrary, is exercised only by an act of the will: we speak only when we desire to speak.

A second difference. We can see or hear no more than our eyes or our ears permit; and we cannot see less or hear less in any other way than by withdrawing ourselves from the action of external things, and by placing some veil, as it were, or other obstacle between the outer world and ourselves.

It is not so with the voice. We can speak stronger or weaker, louder or lower, faster or slower, exactly as we wish; we can as easily regulate the measurement of our voice as we can its utterance.

The consequence to be deduced from this is very clear and obvious. We need no learning to hear or to see (I speak of the physical act only); therefore hearing and see-

ing cannot be considered arts ; but we do need learning in order to speak, speech being an operation entirely dependent on the will and exclusively resulting from its exercise.

This may demand a little further explanation.

The organ of the voice is not merely an *organ*; it is really an *instrument*, just as much as a piano is an instrument. Now, what is the prominent characteristic of the piano? Its *key-board*. What does the key-board consist of? Of several octaves, generally six or six and a half. These octaves comprise three kinds of notes: the base notes, the middle notes, and the high notes, the sound of each note depending on the length, thickness, tightness, and other qualities of the strings. Well, the voice has a key-board too, and a range, just like the piano; it has three kinds of notes, just like the piano; and, just like the piano, it has strings thick and thin, loose and tight, long and short. Therefore, as we can never expect to play the piano without being taught, we may never expect to play well on the voice organ without being also taught.

I may say even more. On leaving the hands of a skilful manufacturer, a piano is an instrument as complete and perfect as human skill can make it, and the sounds it gives forth are as harmonious and correct as artist-hand can produce. But the little piano we receive from Mother Nature is very far from being in a state of such perfection. Some of its strings are wanting altogether; some of its sounds are quite discordant; some of its notes are absolutely false; so that by the time we come to be a voice-pianist, we have got to be not only a player, but also a manufacturer, a repairer, a tuner, that is to say, we are ourselves obliged to complete, harmonize, equalize, adjust, and tune our instrument.

In the art of reading, our three kinds of notes, the low,



the middle, and the high, are all indispensable ; but, as their force and value are different, their employment must also be evidently somewhat different. Of the three, the solidest, the most flexible, and the most natural is the middle voice. As Molé<sup>27</sup>, a celebrated actor of the last century, often said, "the middle voice is the father, without it no posterity." The middle voice, in fact, is our ordinary voice, and is therefore the best and truest delineator of our truest and most natural sentiments. The low notes are not without great power ; the high notes are occasionally brilliant ; but to neither should recourse be had frequently ; they should be employed only when certain unusual effects are to be produced — that is to say only exceptionally and sparingly. As an illustration, I should compare our high notes to cavalry, whose peculiar province is to make dashing charges and initiate strong attacks ; the low notes I should compare to the artillery, as denoting strength, effort, and the putting forth of unusual power ; but the main body of the army, its real working strength and spirit, the element on which the tactician relies the most and employs the oftenest, is the infantry. The middle voice is our infantry. The chief precept, therefore, which I would most earnestly impress on you is this: to the middle voice accord the supremacy, first, last, and always ! The high notes are too frail, too thin, too delicate. By employing them too often or too much, you wear them out, you falsify them, you make them squeaky ; your little piano will be put out of tune and the whole organ, in fact, considerably changed for the worse.

Not unfrequently even has the abuse of these high notes affected injuriously the orator's very flow of thought. Berryer<sup>28</sup>, the world-renowned advocate, assured me that he lost, one day, a very good cause by unconsciously start-

ing his speech in too high a key. His temples soon felt the unusual fatigue of the larynx; from the temples, it passed to the brain; the strain being too great, the brain gave way; the thought became confused, and the language disarranged and indistinct. Berryer actually broke down in open court simply because he had never thought of descending from the lofty perch whence his voice had started at the beginning of his discourse.

Just as dangerous is the abuse of the lower notes. They always tend to infuse monotony, gloom, dulness, heaviness. Talma<sup>29</sup>, in his younger days, gave way often to this defect. His voice, though mainly powerful and emotional, had a touch of the dismal about it. Long and careful training alone at last succeeded in keeping it out of the cavern into which it was too often disposed to fall.

A little anecdote occurs to me this moment on this very subject, and it is perhaps worth relating. My father, as I have already had the pleasure of telling you, was an excellent reader. To this talent much of his success as Professor in the College of France was due, it being a regular habit of his to introduce into his more serious lessons passages from the great poets, which he recited with much applause. This applause, of course, he naturally appreciated, but just as naturally it procured him envy, jealousy, enmity. A hostile critic wrote in some paper: "Yesterday, Monsieur Legouv   gave us two scenes from Racine, his voice as sepulchral as ever." A *good-natured* friend, Parseval-Grandmaison<sup>30</sup>, the elegant poet, seeing the article, instantly says to himself, "Poor Legouv   will be put out by this slander. Really I must run and console him a little."

He finds my father stretched on the sofa, and looking decidedly out of sorts.

"Ah! my dear Parseval, is that you?"

"Hello! Legouv  . What's the matter? A little sick, eh?"

"No — o — throat a little sore — that's all! But say, Parseval, what do you think of my voice?"

"I think it is a splendid voice — a first-class voice!"

"Yes, yes — but how would you characterize it? What is its style? Its quality? Would you call it — hem — a brilliant voice?"

"Brilliant — well, no. Brilliant is not exactly the epithet by which I would characterize your voice. I should rather call it a sonorous voice."

"Sonorous — that's it, isn't it? Mine is a sonorous voice?"

"Well — though your voice is decidedly a sonorous voice, sonorous is not exactly the best term to describe it. Perhaps it would be better to call your voice a grave voice."

"Grave — well! Grave be it. But not dismal?"

"Dismal! Oh, not at all dismal! By no manner of means dismal! — However — occasionally —"

"But you can't call it a hollow voice, eh? or a croaking voice, or a cavernous voice, or —?"

"Certainly not! Neither hollow, nor croaking, nor cavernous! Far from it! Still —"

"Enough!" cried my father, bursting into a merry laugh. "I see you have not only read this infernal critic's article, but you actually believe his criticism! *Sepulchral* is the epithet you are looking for, isn't it? Ha! ha! ha!"

The story is not without its moral. From that day my father was exceedingly careful and even cautious regarding the use of his low notes; by mingling them judiciously with the two other registers, he at last succeeded in reach-

ing that natural variety of intonations which is at once a charm for the hearer and a rest for the reader.

But careful efforts towards effecting this judicious mingling, are not the only exercises the voice must undergo. A voice, to be properly trained, requires continual practice, constant orderly work. Systematic practice makes weak voices strong, stiff voices flexible, harsh voices soft—it acts, in short, on the speaking voice exactly as systematic musical practice acts on the singing voice. It has been even said of some artists—Duprez<sup>31</sup>, for instance—*that they have made themselves a voice*. The expression, of course, is not literally correct; we can never *make* ourselves a voice, if nature does not give us one. If this could be done, none of us would be without a voice. Nobody would ever lose his voice, if he could only *make* himself a new one whenever he pleased. But the expression is perfectly correct, if we give it its evident meaning. We can improve our voice to such a degree that it might be called a new one, that you could scarcely recognize it. We can give it body, brilliancy, grace, and this, not only by the regular gymnastic practice for strengthening the organ, but also by training it into a certain method of successfully attacking the sounds. What is clearly meant by *making a voice* is: careful study often gives an artist notes that he had not at all at first. And this is perfectly true. One day, Madame Malibran<sup>32</sup>, singing the famous rondo in *La Sonnambula*, actually sent us into ecstasies by thrilling on high D, after starting from D three octaves below! Had she acquired these three octaves from nature? Not at all! To diligent work alone, and study and practice and patience, was she indebted for a good many extra notes.

After the concert, I remember it like yesterday, some of us crowded around her and naturally expressed our

admiration for her high D. She replied with a pleasant laugh :

“ Ah, I have been looking long enough for that same high D ! A full month at least have I been on its track ! Everywhere did I search for it ! Dressing and undressing, day and night, combing and washing, and one morning just as I was putting on my shoe what should I find inside but my high D ! ”

This shows us how art not only teaches us to govern our dominions well, but also actually how to extend their frontiers



## CHAPTER IV.

### *TAKING BREATH.*

THE second point to which I wish to call your attention is how to take breath when you read. At first sight it would certainly seem that if there is a natural act in the world, an act with which art can have nothing whatever to do, that act is the act of taking breath. Breathing is living, and we breathe as unconsciously as we live. Be assured, however, that we can never read well if we do not take our breath well, which is a thing we can never do without first learning how to do it. In fact, to know how to take his breath properly is one of the most unusual qualifications of a reader. Before you give way to your surprise, let me explain what I mean.

When we breathe as we ordinarily do, the air, entering our lungs, leaves them like a gentle current of water issuing from a spring-well, continuously, insensibly, regularly. But would this quiet flow of air through the windpipe be enough to put the vocal chords in vibration? Not at all. They would remain just as mute as a piano-string when we do not touch the key. Air is quite as necessary to the vocal apparatus as fingers to the piano. The air must exert a pressure in order to produce a sound.

Some of you have probably heard an æolian harp. What causes its strings to vibrate? You place it in a window-frame, between the lower sash and the sill. If there is but a slight current of air, the harp is mute. It is only when

the current condenses and wind is produced that the strings resound. The same phenomenon occurs whenever we speak. We condense, we compress the air as it comes from our lungs, we force it as it struggles in our windpipe, and speech is the result of the shock. Now what have we been doing? We have simply—to say it in a word or two—we have simply been expending more air than is required for a single act of ordinary respiration. The comparison of the flowing spring is now no longer correct; we must rather think of water discharged by a force-pump, with greater pressure, greater density, greater rapidity. This is a great modification of the ordinary conditions of breathing. We can give only what we have. To expend more, we must possess more. The little reservoir of air that would be quite sufficient to supply the normal and insensible act of breathing, is evidently far from sufficient to satisfy the demands made by the energetic actions of speech. We must therefore establish a balance between our *debts* and our *credits*. We must keep a larger stock on hand. And for this purpose we must draw continual checks on the bank itself, that is to say, on the atmosphere that surrounds us. Drawing these checks is taking breath. Breathing well, therefore, consists of the harmonious performance of two separate actions—aspiration or taking breath, and respiration or exhaling breath. Inhaling is collecting, storing our goods away; exhaling is parting with them, using them up.

These are two different arts; to inhale well is an art, to exhale well is an art. Now what is the chief point to be observed in the art of inhaling? Simply this: we must take breath by means of the base of our lungs, we must employ the diaphragm itself to perform the operation. If to inhale we employ only the upper portion of our lungs,

we take in but a small stock of air. We never fill up our magazine. We hardly fill a third of it. What is the consequence? Our stock runs out quickly, too quickly, so that, if we have a long passage to read, we resemble the man who started on a journey across the desert with his water-pitcher only half full. We want air; we can't do without air; we must turn back then and get air—a great fatigue for yourself, and for your hearers too, as you shall find presently.

The first duty, therefore, of a reader who has some serious work on hand, is, at the very beginning, to take a good deep inspiration so as to give his lungs an abundant supply. Then comes the second part of the performance—a far more difficult one—the paying out. A bad reader never inhales enough, and always exhales too much—that is, he wastes an ill-supplied store without order or measure. He squanders his money lavishly, like the prodigal son, expending it on trifles, instead of distributing it with forethought, with science—in a word, he is totally unable to husband it habitually and systematically, so as to be always ready to display it magnificently on the grand occasions.

The result is inevitable; it happens as a matter of course. We see it every day. The reader or the speaker, like certain actors or singers, is obliged to make a constant appeal to the bellows, to take those noisy, wheezy, hoarse catches of breath, so well known in theatrical language as gasps—more painful even to the hearer than to the performer.

A certain singer, in other respects really eminent, had this fault. He took in breath every moment, until this double action of the lungs, half singing half hissing, at last became unsupportable. He perceived it, however, at



last, himself, and corrected it — a proof that such a fault can be corrected.

Stockhausen,<sup>33</sup> a real artist, astonished the Swiss guides by never allowing himself to be put out of breath by the hardest feats of climbing. "It was quite a simple matter," said he to me one day; "I know exactly when to take in my breath and when to let it out." Rubini<sup>34</sup> the famous singer reached the highest eminence in this peculiar art. He was never heard to take breath. How did he manage it? A little anecdote may explain the secret.

Talma when still young was playing in Diderot's<sup>35</sup> *Père de famille*. Coming to the famous but rather lengthy passage, "*Fifteen hundred francs a year, and my Sophie*," etc., he starts off at a tremendous pace, cries, yells, gesticulates — but he has hardly left the stage when, completely out of breath, he stops, leans against a wing for support, and rests there a few minutes panting, puffing, and blowing like an overworked ox.

"Simpleton!" cries Molé, glancing at him with some contempt, "yet nothing less than tragedy will go down with you! Come to my room to-morrow, and let me show you how to be passionate without splitting your lungs."

Talma went to his room, but, whether the master lacked patience or the pupil docility, the lesson did not seem to improve matters.

There was at that time in the theatre an actor named Dorival<sup>36</sup>, who, though thin, consumptive-looking, and weak-voiced, managed to play certain tragic parts with some success.

"How does the confounded fellow manage it?" asked Talma of himself. "I am ten times stronger, yet he gets through his work with ten times less fatigue! I must ask him for his secret!"

He asks, but Dorival puts him off by a reply altogether too fawning to be without a certain smack of jealousy.

"Oh! Monsieur Talma, you are too successful a tragedian to stand in need of any poor lesson of mine!"

"You refuse, eh?" says Talma; "all right! But," he adds in an underbreath, "I shall get at that secret of yours or know for what!"

One evening, when Dorival was playing *Châtillon* in Voltaire's<sup>37</sup> famous tragedy of *Zaïre*, what does young Talma do but ensconce himself in the prompter's box—to see without any danger of being seen. There, wrapped up in complete obscurity and silent as a wild beast ready for the spring, he spies, he pries, he notes, he marks, he watches and waits. But he has not to wait very long. At the end of the well-known passage in the second act, he suddenly quits his hiding-place, exclaiming: "Hurrah! I've got you now!"

What had he discovered? Nothing more or less than this: that all Dorival's art depended on his knowing how to take breath. And in what did that knowledge consist? "He always made sure" (I am copying Talma's own words) "to take breath just before his lungs were entirely exhausted of air; and, in order to effectively conceal his continuous inhalations, which would have broken up his speech and even interrupted the current of his emotion, he took in breath more particularly before the *a*'s or *e*'s or *o*'s, never before the *i*'s or *u*'s, that is to say, only at the very places where the mouth, already open, permitted him to breathe so lightly as never to be heard by the audience."

It is easy to see what an immense part the art of breathing plays in elocution. The rules for taking breath are, in fact, the only rules that we must never violate. The actor,

once fairly started on a vehement passage, whirled away by passion, anger, grief, may forget the laws of punctuation, may treat commas and periods as disrespectfully as if such very necessary elements in the art of printing never existed, may dash madly through a field of words as wild and as headstrong as a runaway horse, but one thing he must *not* do—he must *never* run himself out of breath. He may indeed pretend to lose his breath, and no doubt often does so with decided effect; but a true actor never has a readier stock of breath on hand than when he seems to have completely run himself out of it.

All his rules on this subject Talma reduced to one striking maxim:

*“Every artist that lets himself run out of breath is nothing more than mediocre.”*

Here you may no doubt object, and say: the art of breathing is of course all very well for actors, but now the question concerns not acting but reading.

My reply is: this talent is even more necessary to the reader than to the actor. We must never forget that the actor, no matter how long or important his part may be, has always his breathing spells, his moments of suspension, and can easily rest himself while the others are speaking; the very gestures even by which he accompanies his words assist his voice in giving these words their true and full value. But the reader not unfrequently reads for hours without a single interruption, and the motionlessness of his body compels him to rely for the proper effect on his voice alone. If you take all this into consideration, you will hardly say that the art is useless which teaches him to husband this priceless treasure, breath, a plentiful supply of which can alone carry him unexhausted and uninjured to the very end of his career.

While on this subject, I will just call your attention to a little experiment in the science of economy as applied to breathing. Take a lighted candle and, standing pretty close to it, sing the note *do*. The light is hardly affected. But, instead of a single note, sing the whole octave, and you will see how at every note the light flickers and trembles. Well, Delle Sedie<sup>38</sup>, the singer, often ran up and down the whole gamut without making the light quiver once. How so? you will naturally ask. By simply never allowing more breath to escape than was absolutely necessary to emit the note; the air, employed in forming the note, had too much to do to become wind: to form the sound gave it sufficient employment.

Now, on the contrary, what do you do—I mean, of course, what do you and I do? We waste the wind, we scatter it right and left, we fritter away our store.

Our own elocution rule against this prodigality is a good one, and it is so easily remembered that, with a slight change, it might be profitably extended far beyond the field of mere elocution:

*Never in any action of our lives should we expend more force than is absolutely necessary to accomplish it. All the emotions of the soul are treasures. Let us always carefully economize them, until the moment comes to employ them to advantage.*

How many of us use up in little pets of impatience, in little puerile acts of peevishness and irritation that invaluable treasure—anger—so sacred, so forcible, so powerful when it can be called indignation!

A few concluding observations may be useful to the student of reading. If you desire to inhale and exhale freely and without much effort, accustom yourself to using a high seat. Doubled up in an arm-chair, you can never

breathe from the base of your lungs. I will even add, sit up straight. A stooping man can never breathe properly, and as often as you can, keep your back supported. Often and often, when reading in public and beginning to feel somewhat fatigued both in brain and voice, I manage to cool the one and to rest the other by simply lifting my head gently and stretching myself a little backwards over my chair. The proper balance is instantly re-established, my lungs resume their easy play, and my head feels as clear and as easy as ever.

## CHAPTER V.

### A PRACTICAL LESSON.

THE art of taking breath is so important that I do not like to quit the subject without giving you what may be called a practical lesson. I hope you will find it useful and instructive, as it certainly is curious and even unique.

Madame Talma<sup>39</sup> had obtained an immense reputation as *Cassandra* in Lemer cier's<sup>40</sup> well-known tragedy of *Agamemnon*.

In her "Memoirs," in order to give her readers an idea of the conscientious care with which she prepared that part even in the slightest particulars, she transcribes a page or two from her note-book. These remarks of hers I wish you to examine.

After quoting a long passage in full, fifteen lines, she takes each phrase separately, and checks it off with a note as follows :

*Tu n'en crois pas le Dieu dont je suis inspirée.*

(Thou dost not believe in the God by whom I am inspired.)

NOTE. Here no more being required to complete the sense, I can take a full breath.

*A l'oracle trop vrai, par ma bouche dicté,*

(To the most true oracle dictated by my lips,)

NOTE. Here only a quarter breath, the sense being suspended.

*Il attachait le doute et l'incrédulité.*

(He would yield nothing but doubt and incredulity.)

NOTE. Meaning complete, full breath.



*Amante d' Apollon,*  
(Though beloved of Apollo,)

NOTE. Quarter breath, this being only a preparation for what is to follow.

*à sa flamme immortelle,*  
(to his immortal flame)

NOTE. To breathe here insensibly, and so facilitate the delivery of the rest of the sentence.

*Depuis que ma froideur se montra si rebelle,*  
(My coldness having proved too rebellious,)

NOTE. A quarter breath, to separate it from what follows, naturally but not too coldly.

*Ce Dieu*  
(The God)

NOTE. Breath insensible.

*me retira son favorable appui,*  
(withdrew from me his favorable regards,)

NOTE. Quarter breath.

*Il m' accabla des maux que je pleure aujourd' hui ;*  
(And overwhelmed me with evils that I am now bewailing;)

NOTE. Half breath, the sense being nearly complete.

*Mes yeux*  
(My eyes)

NOTE. Insensible breath, so as to be able to manage the rest of the sentence with ease.

*ont vu périr ma famille immolée.*  
(have seen my whole family doomed to destruction.)

NOTE. Half breath, to bring out fully the succeeding reflexion.

*Que suis-je ?*  
(What am I now ?)

NOTE. A half breath.

*Une ombre errante aux enfers appelée.*

(A flitting ghost so on to wander on the Stygian shore.)

NOTE. A half breath, not to crowd the images.

*L' heure fatale approche ;*

(The fatal hour draws nigh ;)

NOTE. A full breath, to manage the transition.

*Adieu, fleuves sacrés,*

(Sacred streams, adieu !)

NOTE. A quarter breath, to separate, but not too abruptly, the following apostrophe.

*Ondes du Simois !*

(Waters of the Simois !)

NOTE. Quarter breath.

*Sur vos bords révérés,*

(On your treasured shores,)

NOTE. Half-quarter breath, to mark the incidental phrase.

*Vous ne me verrez plus,*

(Never again shall you see me,)

NOTE. Breath insensible.

*comme en nos jours propices,*

(as in those happy days,)

NOTE. Breath insensible, to maintain all the strength required for the rest of the sentence.

*Parer de nœuds de fleurs*

(Decking with garlands gay,)

NOTE. Insensible breath.

*l' autel de sacrifices ;*

(the sacrificial altar ;)

NOTE. Full breath, the meaning being complete. Besides, a little time is required for passing naturally to a new idea.



*Et ma voix,*

(And my voice,)

NOTE. Insensible breath.

*chez les morts, où bientôt je descends,*

(among the dead where I presently shall be,)

NOTE. Half-quarter breath, on account of the inversion.

*Au bruit de l'Achéron*

(With the wailing flow of the Acheron)

NOTE. Half-quarter breath, so as to maintain the voice in all its energy to the very last words.

*mêlera ses accents.*

(will mingle its sadder accents.)

Many will no doubt skip this chapter as useless, perhaps senseless, but to others it will suggest ideas fertile as well as novel.

## CHAPTER VI.

### PRONUNCIATION.

FROM the world of sounds let us now pass to the world of words. We left off at the vowels ; suppose we try to unite them with the consonants.

The consonants are the solid framework of the word ; they are its bones. From the consonants we can reconstruct the word itself, just as Cuvier used to reconstruct the animals.

It is the intimate union between the vowels and the consonants that constitutes pronunciation. There is no such thing as pronouncing a consonant by itself, and even the vowel, though it forms the sound that we emit, does not form the word that we pronounce.

On the clearness of our pronunciation depends the clearness of our discourse. In fact, too much cannot be said of good pronunciation. It is the main point in our delivery ; on it depends the very life of our words. Of pronunciation therefore we should know the precise, the exact rules. The rules touching the vowels are indeed simple enough ; in fact they may be all reduced to a single one : *give your vowels the intonation accepted in Paris.*

With regard to the vowel sounds Paris is a merciless despot, and admits of no appeal. Provincial France, especially in the south, almost always gives the vowels a twang that to Parisian ears borders on the ridiculous. Of this I could give you many a striking example ; one must be sufficient.

Only a short time ago, one of our most eminent orators, in an attack on some minister or other, displayed a nerve, a fiery impassioned eloquence seldom before equalled, certainly never surpassed. All at once what should be heard in the midst of one of his ringing sentences but "*Chambre hotte*" instead of *haute*; pretty soon "*fantommes*" was heard instead of "*fantômes*," and lastly "*ennées*" for "*années*." People begin to look around and smile, even some little coughs were heard; the flow of the discourse was interrupted, and its general effect decidedly injured. But, instead of being an orator of the first rank, suppose the gentleman to be one of only moderate ability, or a stranger whose faults the public would not be over anxious to excuse, would not grins, and whispers, and even jeering laughter have been likely to greet every new appearance of the fatal vowel? Would the orator's arguments have been listened to? No; nothing but his accent would be regarded. The very best efforts of his unquestioned talents would have hardly gained him anything like a patient hearing.

Within the last few days, a young man from the provinces, full of talent and not without a spark of real genius, begged me to give him a few hints on the art of reading in public.

"Let me hear you recite one of Fontaine's fables," was my reply.

He began :

"*Du palais d'un jeune lapin — —* "

only he pronounced it

"*Du pâlais d'un jeune lâpin — —* "

I stopped him right off.

"First go and learn the proper sound of the *a*'s," said I; "then we shall see what else may be done."

Everywhere but at Paris will you find this endemic and epidemic alteration or rather peculiar sound of the vowels. Sometimes it is the *e*, sometimes the *o*, and sometimes the *u*; but it is always a vowel that is disfigured. In Paris even, the laboring-classes and the people generally of inferior education often give the vowels a vulgar sound; how often do we hear *chaquin*, for instance, instead of *chacun*! If you ever intend to read in public, therefore, you cannot be too careful in practising yourselves beforehand in giving each vowel its proper intonation. Remember that a short accent wrongly used for a long one, or a circumflex for an acute, is a misfortune quite sufficient in itself to spoil the best sentence.

As to the consonants, the art of pronouncing them perfectly is the art of articulating them perfectly. There is no art more useful, but it is one that is by no means easy of acquirement. Few people possess from nature perfect powers of articulation. With some it is too strong, with others too weak, with many indistinct. These defects can be remedied by systematic labor, and by that alone. How? you naturally ask. Well, here is one way, very ingenious and effective, and yet extremely simple and eminently practicable. You wish, let us suppose, to confide a secret to a friend; but you are afraid of being overheard, the door being open and somebody listening in the next room. What would you do? Walk up to your friend and whisper the secret into his ear? Not at all. You might be caught in the act, and so excite suspicion. What should you do? I will tell you, and, in doing so, I quote the exact words of that master of masters, Regnier:

“You face your friend exactly, and, pronouncing your words distinctly but in an under-breath, you commission your articulations to convey them to your friend’s eyes

rather than to his ears, for he is as carefully watching how you speak as he is intently listening to what you say. Articulation, having here a double duty to perform, that of sound as well as its own peculiar function, is compelled as it were to dwell strongly on each syllable so as to land it safely within the intelligence of your hearer."

This is an infallible means of correcting all the defects and faults of your articulation. It is at once an exercise and a test; if you don't articulate well, your friend will not understand you. After a very few months' steady practice at this exercise for a few hours a day, you will find that your most obdurate articulatory muscles become flexible as well as strong, that they rise elastically and respond harmoniously to every movement of the thought and to every difficulty of the pronunciation.\*

The part played in reading by articulation is very great. It is articulation, and articulation alone, that gives clearness, energy, passion, vehemence. So great is its power that it can fully compensate for a feeble voice even before a large assembly. Actors of the first order have been almost without a voice. Potier<sup>41</sup> had no voice. Monvel<sup>42</sup>, the famous Monvel, had no voice, he had not even teeth! But his audience never lost a word, and never did artist produce a more pathetic effect. How? By the perfection of his articulation.

Andrieux<sup>43</sup> was one of the most finished readers I ever heard. His voice was worse than weak; it was feeble, ragged, husky. How did he win such triumphs in spite

\* Regnier's method is in fact the one usually employed in teaching the deaf and dumb to *speak*. The master pronounces the words before them with his lips, tongue, and teeth — no sound, no voice, nothing but a strongly accented articulation. The deaf-mute reads the word as it issues noiselessly from the master's lips.

of such serious drawbacks? Splendid articulation again! By making you listen to him he made you hear him. His incomparable articulation made not to listen a matter of impossibility.

Sometimes a few of the resources of articulation are revealed by a fortunate hoarseness. Bouffé<sup>44</sup> was playing one of his great creations, *Père Grandet*, in the *Miser's Daughter*. At one of the most affecting points in the play, where the old miser suddenly discovers that he is robbed, the actor began to cry and lament as usual, but, all at once his voice failed him, every sound expired on his lips, and there he was, compelled to recite his words actually in dumb show! What was the consequence? He was actually more natural, more affecting, and far more impressive by being compelled to make distinct articulation supply the place of indistinct sound!

Without a voice, of course, we cannot speak, but the voice alone is so far from being sufficient in elocution that to many readers, orators, and actors the very copiousness, fullness, and richness of their organ are likely to become rather an inconvenience than an advantage. Unless they are extremely careful in their articulation, the word is swamped in the sound. The vowels swallow up the consonants. These gentlemen speak, read, and recite with so much loudness and resonance that it is often as difficult to hear what they say as it is to catch the words of an orator holding forth in a hall of bad acoustic properties.

At times too a silly fashion suppresses the articulation. It is not a hundred years ago since the Parisian dandies suppressed the *r*. Almost as listless as the cockney "swells" of London, who to-day say *laud* for *lord*, and *pawk* for *park*, *vewy* for *very* and *wipe* for *ripe*, they never sounded



the *r* at the end of a syllable or before a consonant. An old frequenter of the *Théâtre-Français*<sup>45</sup> tells me he remembers as many as three distinct modes of articulation capriciously affected by our Parisian fops.

A sensible man has one mode of articulation and one only, namely: always *to pronounce his words in such a manner as to be readily understood, but never in such a manner as to excite remark.*



## CHAPTER VII.

### *SOME PECULIAR DEFECTS IN ARTICULATION.*

BESIDES the general defects of indistinctness, mispronunciation, weakness or harshness of voice, etc., there are other imperfections in articulation which cannot be passed by unnoticed. They are chiefly three: lisping, *ughing* (there is no English word for *grasseusement*, a thick pronunciation of the *r* rather peculiar to Frenchmen), and stuttering.

Lisping is pronouncing *s* like *th* in the word *that*; it proceeds from allowing the tongue to pass the teeth when we pronounce *s*. It is sometimes the result of an organic defect, but it springs oftenest from a bad habit confirmed by custom. The worst feature in lisping is that it gives an air of silliness to our most serious moments. Here is a case in point.

In his younger days Regnier was assigned the part of a simpleton in some play or other. Of how he should get through such a *rôle* with anything like success he had not the faintest idea, and all his reflexions on the subject ended in nothing practicable. He was almost in despair, when, happening to call into some store one day, he saw a purchaser there lisping so outrageously that the attendants had all they could do to keep their faces straight.

“The very man I want!” says Regnier to himself; “that’s the model I have to copy!”

It was a most happy thought. His imitation of a lisper

was so natural and at the same time judicious that his success as a simpleton was immense.

Even this little anecdote should be enough to convince you that if inclined to this defect you should get rid of it as soon as possible. The task is by no means difficult. You have only to practise pretty regularly and for some time, giving *s* its own sound by pressing the top of your tongue against the inside of the lower, *not the upper*, front teeth. This will accustom the tongue to keep within precise bounds; and custom will soon become second nature.

The *r* is mispronounced in several ways. English exquisites, as already remarked, sound it somewhat like the English *w*; they say *wing* for *ring* and *wubber* for *rubber*. Many English and American people too, who are too sensible to be exquisites, mispronounce the *r* by hardly pronouncing it at all; they say *wu'ld* and *lau'd* for *world* and *lord*, imitating unconsciously the negroes of the Southern States. The French mispronunciation of the *r* is different altogether. It comes from viciously rendering the *r*, not with the tip of the tongue, as they should do, vibrating it quickly against the palate, but by lazily pressing the root of the tongue against the throat. To pronounce the *r* well we must strike the edge of the palate close to the teeth with the tip of the tongue. To do it very well we must, as we say, *roll the r*. There is no denying that it is a difficult letter to pronounce, and one of the last that children succeed in mastering. The defect, therefore, is extremely common in France. Almost every Parisian mispronounces his *r*'s in spite of himself; the Marseillians are still worse, though it must certainly be admitted that the people of South France generally pronounce the troublesome letter exceedingly well.

One of the inconveniences of this vicious utterance is

to make your language dull, heavy, and too full of disagreeable guttural sounds; another is to completely disqualify you from singing an Italian song. Italian ears abominate this French cacophony. They cannot bear it. Alizard<sup>46</sup>, a celebrated opera singer, possessing one of the finest bass voices I ever heard, was obliged to decline a splendid engagement in Italy simply because his *r*'s always came from his throat. Imagine his despair. But an actor cured him as he had cured himself. By what means? By the application of an idea of Talma's, who had himself labored under the same trouble. The two letters *d* and *t*, formed at the end of the tongue, are easily and naturally pronounced by everybody. Talma's idea was first to pronounce these two letters rapidly and alternately; as *de te, de te*, etc. Then by degrees joining *r* to them, he pronounced the new combinations also rapidly and alternately, *dre tre, dre tre*, etc. By this contrivance it struck him, that he could fish up the letter *r* from the depths of the throat where it seemed to prefer keeping itself; that he could compel it, as it were, to answer the call of its companions inviting it to the dance. Imagine a young girl — excuse the oddness of the comparison — a timid, shrinking young girl, hiding herself in a corner of the ball-room, but called out by her companions, who drag her forcibly and merrily into the middle of the circling throng. Soon, however, one friend slips away, then another, and another, so that at last our modest, timid, shy last comer finds herself unconsciously dancing and dancing well without the protection of any participating companions. That is exactly what Talma did. He first dropped the *d* and then the *t*; instead of saying *dre tre, dre tre*, he said *re re, re re*; and kept on doing this so persistently that at last the *r*, having been well accustomed

to vibrate with the others, had no difficulty in vibrating all alone.

A well-known actor of the day amused me very much once by telling me about another contrivance, an invention of his own, by which he had cured himself of this defect. He was young, not without talent, but one day he found himself deeply immersed in two very different pursuits, both equally difficult, though by no means equally interesting. His thoughts by day and his dreams by night were almost equally engrossed in an endless chase after two objects — the rolling *r*, and the hand of a young lady whom he loved to distraction. Six months' hardest and most determined efforts seemed to be quite as fruitless in one direction as in the other; the rolling *r* and the lovely creature were both equally obstinate. At last, one evening, after some hours' tenderest supplications and protestations, he succeeded in touching the stubborn heart — the young lady smiled and said "yes." Intoxicated with joy he leaves the room he knows not how, tears downstairs four steps at a time, and cries aloud as he passes the janitor's room :

"Pull the rope, if you please, and open the doorr !"

Oh, glorious surprise ! The *r*'s in *rope* and *door* rang out as pure and as true and as vibrating as any that had ever come from the richest Italian organ ! But a sudden chill strikes him — Perhaps it is only a chance blow, a lucky shot ! Try again !

"Rope, if you please !"

The same splendid success ! No doubt possible ! The rolling *r* is his own at last ! And to whom is he indebted for the inestimable fortune ? To his own dearly loved one and to nobody else ! It was the transports of successful love that had wrought the miracle ! But would it last ?

When his emotions would have subsided, would that fat, greasy, lazy, detested *r* turn up again?

This was the question he asked himself continually as he hurried homewards along the silent street. But by way of answering it, and mortally afraid of losing his conquest, he kept continually repeating in a loud voice :

“Rope, if you please ! Pull the rope, if you please ! The doorr, the rope, if you please ! The rope, the doorr, if you please !”

Suddenly a new incident. As he turned a street-corner, what should jump out of the sewer but an enormous rat. A rat ! Another *r* ! He strings it on at once to his previous conquests, and unites all three into one glorious whole !

“A rrat ! a rope ! a doorr ! Pull the rope ! Open the doorr ! A great rrat ! A strong rope ! An enormous rrat !”

He never went home till morning. How the *r*'s rolled out, and the streets rang again during the rest of that eventful night ! He marched as if in a grand triumphal procession ! He had gained two magnificent victories. The adored Parisian fair one, and the treasured Italian *r* were now his own forevermore !



# PROPERTY OF DEPARTMENT OF DRAMATIC ART

## CHAPTER VIII.

### *STUTTERING.*

**S**TUTTERING is a more serious defect, more stubborn, more rebellious, and of a more particular nature. It is a failing at once material and spiritual, mechanical and intellectual. It no doubt often proceeds from some mal-conformation — when of course nothing is left for us but to apply to the doctors ; but no doubt too it often proceeds from lack of intellectual culture, and then some attempt at its remedy falls somewhat within our own province.

People often stammer and stutter because their minds are stammering and stuttering, because they themselves don't exactly know what they mean or what they want, because they are too timorous, or too angry, or in too much of a hurry. Impatience, timidity, want of precision in ideas — these are the usual causes of stuttering and stammering, but these failings are far from being without a remedy. Accustom yourself to speak slowly, with deliberation, only when you are complete master of yourself, when you have made up your mind definitely on what you are going to say.

A distinguished singer, whom I could easily name, stammers slightly when he speaks, though he never stammers when he sings. Why so? Simply because when he sings he is sure of his ground. As long as his words are united to his notes, previous practice, labor, study, custom, have made him a complete master of his voice and utterance ; but the instant he begins to speak, the natural oversensi-



tiveness of his disposition attacks him, overcomes him, and surrenders him up an easy prey to all his uncertainties of pronunciation. The artist vanishes, the man remains, and the stammerer as before turns "right side up."

As for physical or material stuttering, arising from some natural defect or impediment, it is only the doctors, as I have just stated, that can undertake to cure it.

Though the stutterer generally finds a difficulty before all the letters without exception, he often finds some far more refractory than others; the rest he may overcome, but these always bring him to a dead halt, just as certain obstacles always stop timid horses. On this point I can give you a little anecdote.

About twenty years ago, in conjunction with Scribe<sup>47</sup>, I wrote a play, *Doigts de Fée* (Fairy Fingers), in which one of the characters was to be a stutterer. He was to be comical, to create merriment, but by no means to be a buffoon, and even at times we wanted him to be decidedly affecting. Got, of the *Théâtre-Français*, accepted the part without hesitation, but no sooner had he begun to study it than he found himself in a state of some embarrassment. A mere pendant to *Brid'oison*<sup>48</sup> was, of course, not to be thought of; but how could he succeed in exciting interest, emotion, pathos, and at the same time always maintain the comically ridiculous side of his character?

One day, however, he arrives at the rehearsal in great spirits.

"All right!" said he to me. "I've caught the idea! I shall stutter only before two consonants, *d* and *p*. A little reading up of the subject has put me on the track. I think the idea admirable. It completely delivers me from the intolerable bore of continually stuttering, besides rescuing my part from an oppressive monotony. I retain

of the imperfection just enough to give the character a spice of piquancy, to impart a zest of comicality to the whole personage without ever rendering it either absurd or ridiculous. Only, my dear author," he added gaily, "the arrangement must undoubtedly give you somewhat more trouble. You will have to enrich my part with more *d*'s and *p*'s, especially in such passages as I shall mark for you."

I caught the idea at once. Got was quite right. His part was a splendid success; in my own opinion it is one of the most original of all this great artist's conceptions.

Is organic stuttering curable? I doubt it. The doctors have tried their hands at it often enough, but an instance of genuine success I have never seen. To slight improvements, no doubt, intermittences, apparent cures, everybody can point, but who has ever witnessed a real cure?

Every day in the papers we can see any quantity of most wonderful feats in this line performed by certain well-known quacks—I mean by certain eminent physicians. But here is a fact to which I can testify from my own personal knowledge.

When still somewhat young, I was present one evening at a ball given by a fashionable doctor who enjoyed a great reputation in this particular specialty, and who perhaps had really rendered some service to the art of speech by his theoretical researches.

"Sir," said I, to one of my neighbors, "will you oblige me by being my *vis-à-vis* in the next quadrille?"

"Ce — ce — certainly, sir, with g — g — great pleasure."

"Ah!" said I to myself, "the gentleman stammers a little."

We are at the supper-table.

"Sir," said I to another young fellow, "would you mind passing me an ice?"

"N — n — not at all!" was the reply. "Here it — it — it is."

"Stammerer number two," was my silent comment. Turning around, I find myself actually touching an old and well-remembered schoolmate.

"Oh! Leg — leg — legouv !" he exclaims. "De — de — de — delighted to see you! You remem — mem — member how f — f — f — fearfully I stut — tut — tut — tuttered at college?"

"Well, yes."

"Co — co — congratulate me! I've come to Co — co — co — Columbat (our entertainer), p — p — put myself under his ca — care, and now I am co — completely cu — cu — cu — cured!"

This little experience of mine has ever since rendered me somewhat incredulous when I hear of stutterers who stutter no more.

## CHAPTER IX.

### PUNCTUATION.

TO conclude what we have to say on the first portion of our subject, the material part of reading, we must now occupy ourselves a little with what may be called punctuation.

The tongue punctuates as well as the pen.

One day, Samson, sitting at his desk, sees himself approached by a young man apparently pretty well satisfied with himself.

“ You wish to take reading lessons, sir ? ”

“ Yes, Monsieur Samson.”

“ Have you had some practice in reading aloud ? ”

“ O yes, Monsieur Samson, I have often recited whole passages from Corneille and Molière.”

“ In public ? ”

“ Yes, Monsieur Samson.”

“ With success ? ”

“ Well, yes, Monsieur, I think I may flatter myself that far.”

“ Take up that book, please. It is Fontaine’s Fables. Open it at the ‘ *Oak and the Reed*.’ Let me hear you take a turn at a line or two.”

The pupil begins :

“ *The Oak one day, said to the Reed ——* ”

“ That’s enough, sir ! You don’t know anything about reading ! ”

“It is because I don’t know much, Monsieur Samson,” replies the pupil, a little nettled, “it is precisely because I don’t know much that I’ve come to you for lessons. But I don’t exactly comprehend how from my manner of reading a single verse ——”

“Read the line again, sir.”

He reads it again :

“*The Oak one day, said to the Reed ——*”

“There ! You can’t read ! I told you so !”

“But ——”

“But,” interrupts Samson, cold and dry, “but why do you join the adverb to the noun rather than to the verb ? What kind of an Oak is an Oak one day ? No kind at all ! There is no such tree ! Why, then, do you say : ‘the Oak one day, said to the Reed’ ? This is the way it should go : ‘the Oak (comma) one day said to the Reed.’ You understand, of course ?”

“Certainly I do,” replies the other, a new light breaking on him. “It seems as if there should be an invisible comma after *Oak !*”

“You are right, sir,” continues the master. “Every passage has a double set of punctuation marks, one visible, the other invisible ; one is the printer’s work, the other the reader’s.”

“The reader’s ? Does the reader also punctuate ?”

“Certainly he does, quite independently too of the printer’s points, though it must be acknowledged that sometimes both coincide. By a certain cadenced silence the reader marks his period ; by a half silence, his comma ; by a certain accent, an interrogation ; by a certain tone, an exclamation. And I must assure you that it is exclusively on the skillful distribution of these insensible points

that not only the interest of the story, but actually its clearness, its comprehensibility, altogether depends."

Written punctuation being subject to change from century to century, spoken punctuation must vary likewise. Suppose a tragic poet of the present day wrote Corneille's famous *qu'il mourût*, (he should die,). Would n't he put one or two immense exclamation points after it? What has Corneille put? A little comma—nothing more. But that same little comma tells us a great deal. It shows that Corneille had never intended the phrase to be one of tremendous energy, but rather the brave old patriot's involuntary cry, instantly corrected, however, by the succeeding verse, which Voltaire considered weak, simply because he was unable to relish its exquisite delicacy. "He should have died!" cries the Roman. But adds the poor Father:—"Or at least derived strength and courage from a noble despair!"

Dots in succession, or whatever the printers call them, (. . . .) are of an invention comparatively modern. You will not find a single example of them in the seventeenth or the eighteenth century. Even to this day they are seldom employed in English; and in French they are mostly confined to dramatic works. They were especial favorites of Scribe's. They correspond perfectly with the hurried movement of his pieces . . . their agitation . . . their feverishness . . . they show a man to be hard pushed for time . . . hard pressed by action . . . carried away by emotion . . . his words and ideas thronging too rapidly—they are the punctuation of the suggestive. To punctuate thus in reading is an art in which very few reach a high proficiency.

I think you have seen by this time that I was pretty cor-



rect in calling Reading an art, an art too that requires pretty precise rules for its successful management. To these rules I have called your attention. We have spoken of how to emit the voice, how to take breath, and we have not forgotten to make some remarks on pronunciation, articulation, and punctuation — that is to say, we have touched on everything that is concerned in the first or the material or mechanical division of the Art of Reading.

We now come to the second or the spiritual or intellectual division.

## PART II.



Practical Application of Reading.



ELOQUENCE, PROSE, POETRY.



## CHAPTER I.

### *READERS AND ORATORS.*

WE suppose now that the mechanical education of our pupil is everything that it should be. His voice has become agreeable, flexible, and homogeneous. His upper, lower, and medium tones are completely under control and can be judiciously intermingled at will. He can take and emit breath without being noticed by the audience. He pronounces correctly and with perfect purity. His articulation is clear and distinct. His defects in utterance, if he had any, are all removed or corrected. He punctuates as he reads. His enunciation is neither hurried, nor broken, nor unequal, nor drawling. Finally, rarest quality of all, he never lets his last syllables drop, always remembering that, without a clear and distinct utterance of the last syllable, he can never be solidly or perfectly comprehensible.

Does all this render him a finished reader? By no means. The most it can do is to make him a correct reader. Certainly, without fatiguing either himself or others, he can read the report of some business committee, a discourse before some learned body, an important paper on physical science, an essay on some question in political economy, some laborious explanation, some carefully prepared legal document.

The ability to do even so much well is no doubt an important and substantial advantage; it establishes an intimate connexion between Reading and nearly all the

liberal professions, and can consequently rank it in the number of highly useful and almost indispensable requirements.

Still, if you expressed a doubt regarding the claim of even such ability to the distinction of an *art*, I would not say you were wrong. Even such ability would not constitute an art. To be worthy of such a name, Reading must rise to the dignity of being able to reproduce works of undoubted art, must become the interpreter of the masterpieces of genius. For this, mere correctness is far from being sufficient; talent too is indispensably necessary.

Can all men who read passably become first-class readers? All! No. Can all become readers of a certain fair grade? No. Can all learn to become readers with the same facility and in as short a time? No. But can all readers of some natural ability aspire to become what are called good readers? Yes. They can become really good readers, still, however, in strict proportion with their innate intelligence and peculiar gifts. Those organizations of first-rate order, endowed with highly exceptional qualities, will no doubt find that their labors in their own rich soil bear the richest harvest. But the others, without quite reaching the first rank, will come pretty near it.

Genius is heaven-born, but talent is often acquired. Genius reinforced by talent produces a Talma.

In what does this especial talent consist? On what rules is it based?

Saint-Marc Girardin, as we already know, reduces all these rules to one, and that one of a simplicity clear to the dullest comprehension: "Read as you speak."

Girardin is not the only able, witty, but unthinking, man who not only entertains this opinion but accepts it with such conviction as to consider it an axiom, a dogma,

an unquestioned radical principle. But the phrase, though containing some flavor of truth, must not be taken without a good deal of restriction.

Read as we speak? Certainly, if we only speak well. But which of us does speak well? Don't the majority of us speak badly? Are not our ears continually assailed with stammerings, hesitations, mispronunciations, misapplication of terms, offences against the simplest grammar rules, not to speak of drawling, precipitancy, and nasal twang?

Mademoiselle Mars was fond of telling us about a gentleman friend of hers who, though he spoke with a dreadful nasal twang, flattered himself that he had quite a genius for the stage. One day he asked her to listen to his recitation of a passage from *Athalie*, so that she could form an opinion as to his style of delivery. She bore the infliction pretty well for some time, but at the end of the sixth verse she interrupted with loud applause.

"Bravo! my dear sir!" she exclaimed as if transported with admiration; "what depth of emotion! What nobility of expression! There is to be sure a little defect in your pronunciation, but next time I've no doubt I shall find it all perfectly corrected." And she sent the nuisance away quite charmed with his critic, with everybody, and most of all with himself.

Besides we must remember that ordinary conversation admits and even demands a certain negligence in our pronunciation, a sort of carelessness in our utterance, a kind of voluntary remissness or heedlessness which, though perhaps a grace in the speaker, would certainly be a defect in the reader. To talk as we read would generally be pedantry; to read as we talk would often be vulgarity. Examples of what I mean are perhaps more striking in



the French than in most other languages. Take a single instance. Certain syllables, like the possessive adjectives *mes, tes, ses*, are generally pronounced in conversation as if they bore the acute accent. We hear young people continually saying: *repréens donc tés livres*. But if you transferred such a pronunciation into your reading, you would hurt every delicate ear.

A gentleman, who prided himself considerably on the correctness of his pronunciation, came one day to Lafon<sup>49</sup>, the celebrated, but somewhat overdignified, tragedian, to take some lessons in reading. In all probability, however, he was less thirsty after instruction than desirous of hearing himself complimented by the great artist. By way of graceful deference to his teacher, he undertook to read a piece from one of Lafon's most successful impersonations, *Orosmanes*.

In a few moments he was declaiming the line :

“ Représ ta liberté, remporte tés richesses ! ”

“ *Tais* — richesses ! ” interrupted Lafon, correctly.

“ That ’s what I said, was n’t it ? ”

“ No. You said : *tés* richesses ! ”

The reader made the proper correction, and resumed :

“ A l’or de ces rançons, joins *més* justes largesses — ”

“ *Mais* — justes, ” cried Lafon.

“ Really, I thought I said — ”

“ You said : *més* justes. ”

The amateur continued :

“ Au lieu de dix chrétiens que je dois t’accorder,  
Je t’en veux donner cent — tu peux *lés* demander — ”

“ *Lais* ! ”

The reader began to feel a little flustered, but continued:

“Qu'ils aillent sur *tês* pas —”

“*Tais !*”

By this time, however, the reader was too much hurt to stand it any longer; impatiently closing the book, he observed with some asperity:

“I pronounce these words, sir, as everybody else pronounces them.”

“Everybody else,” replied Lafon, in his grandest and most impressive air, “may be everybody else, but art is art. Reading is *reading*, and the rules for reading are not the rules for conversation.”

In these remarks Lafon may have been a little too dictatorial, but fundamentally he was perfectly right, and the conclusion I wish you to arrive at is this: conversation has unquestionably a naturalness, a true inflexion, a variety, an easy utterance, all highly useful, and always to be sought after in reading; but it is only these undeniably good qualities, these very best qualities, of conversation that we should imitate in reading, very carefully avoiding the others, if we aim to be at once natural, true, correct, and impressive.

Another remark falls in here quite naturally. People in general are too apt to confound the two words *to talk* and *to speak*, employing each term indifferently for the other as if they both meant the same thing. But they really mean two very different things. There are people who *talk* very well, even charmingly, but who at the same time *speak* abominably. Do you want a proof? Just go to almost any lawyer's office, and enter into conversation with him. His delivery, simple, natural, effective, leaves nothing to be desired. Follow him into court and listen to

him as he addresses the "Gentlemen of the jury" and launches off into his carefully prepared speech. He is no longer the same man. You listen in surprise. What has become of all the fine qualities that have just now so charmed you? They have vanished into thin air. He had been natural, he is now emphatic; his talking tones had been true, his speaking tones are false—you know you may speak false just as you may sing false. Many a lawyer of my acquaintance speaks in court exactly as if he was imitating Lawyer *L'Intimé* in "*The Pleaders*." Got, Coquelin, and Regnier imitate these lawyers so well that you think these lawyers are imitating Regnier, Coquelin, and Got. Got's lawyer every theatre-goer has by heart; Coquelin has three of them on his string; and as for Regnier, he took for his model a well-known barrister who always introduced into his criminal speeches such a stylish grace of delivery, such a poetic charm of pronunciation, that you absolutely thought you were listening to Mademoiselle Mars playing *Araminta*.

"Gentlemen of the jury," he would say in his most simpering, finical, Laura-Matilda tones, "the dreadful crime, on the point of being unrolled before your horror-stricken gaze, transpired on the sixth of March at day-break. The morning was truly lovely. A game-keeper, passing through the forest, suddenly finds himself on the brink of a small lake. And on the brink of a small lake what does he behold? A man's body covered with wounds and still bleeding!" Regnier's mimicry, particularly of the words *un corps-z-ensanglanté*, was irresistible. In another part of the same play he brought down the house just as wildly when he said with inimitable drollery:

"Gentlemen! everything that is capable of overwhelming the guilt-stricken wretch with horror!"

We must not, however, single out the lawyers as the only offenders; the preachers are no better, often worse. Many and many a clergyman I have heard preach during my lifetime, but I must say that I have never heard more than *one* who spoke as I think he should have spoken, that is, at once naturally and affectingly. Of course I don't give his name; it would be merely gratuitously provoking the others.

You must now see that if you want to read well you must learn how to speak well; but, curiously enough, you must also know that there is only one way of learning to speak well, and that is by reading well. This requires some explanation.

On the morning of some great battle, the general mounts his horse. But what is the use of his being on horseback unless he can ride well? Obligated to change place incessantly, to be in every part of the field almost at the same time, to see with his own eyes the results of certain movements, and to be on hand to give new orders, he must have an animal perfectly docile in every respect, and just as much under subjection as his own limbs. If he was thinking all the time how he could manage his horse, he could never manage his army; he must therefore be a double master—a war-master and a riding-master—at once a Jomini<sup>50</sup> and a D'Aure<sup>51</sup>.

This is precisely the case with the speaker: his voice is his horse, while his speech is his army. If he desires faithful service during the action, he must have rendered himself perfect master of both beforehand. But we can never learn how to arrange our thoughts and our sentences at the same time and by the same process. One distracts the other. Elocution studies, properly so called, and voice exercises are really most efficacious when most closely con-

nected with the ready-made ideas of others. In such a case we can surrender ourselves up to them completely. Having only one thing to do at a time, we have the best possible opportunity of learning how to do it well.

A friend of mine once, a colleague member of the Assembly<sup>52</sup>, a young fellow full of talent, of knowledge, of ambition, expected to make his present position a stepping-stone to the Cabinet. One morning he told me he was to deliver an elaborate address in the House that day, and begged me to come and listen. I went and listened.

"Well?" he asked, as we strolled homeward that evening.

"Well, my dear friend, to be candid with you, I don't think you are bound for the Cabinet this time."

"No? Why not?"

"Because you can't speak."

"How I can't speak?" he asks, evidently offended.

"My discourse, as I have been well assured——"

"Oh! your discourse, as a discourse, was really excellent, full of good sense, of justice, and now and then not without touches of original and decided wit. But what was the good of it all if we could not hear the half of what you said?"

"What! Not hear what I said? Why, even at the very beginning I spoke so loud and so strong that—that——"

"—That you can almost say you screamed! In a quarter of an hour your voice was as hoarse as a drum."

"I don't deny I felt a little husky, but——"

"Wait till I finish. You spoke not only too loud but also too fast."

"Too fast! —Well—However—It is quite possible that towards the end I may have hurried up a little to save time."

"But you did not save time, you lost time, that is, you



made every minute feel like two. Nothing makes a passage appear too long so much as beginning it in too great a hurry. The listener is put on the alert—he sees from your own hurry to get through that you yourself think the piece too long. Unwarned he might perhaps have never noticed it, but, prematurely put on his guard, he becomes impatient long before the proper time.”

“There is something undoubtedly true in what you say,” observed my friend; “I certainly found the reins slipping through my fingers towards the close—but how am I to remedy all this?”

“Nothing simpler. Take lessons from a reading master.”

“Do you know one?”

“Yes, an excellent one.”

“His name?”

“Samson.”

“What! Samson the actor?”

“Yes.”

“Oh! I can’t take lessons from a play-actor!”

“Why not?”

“Only think of it! A Deputy! A rising statesman! I should never hear the end of it, once it got into the papers!”

“There I must say you are quite right! The world is so confoundedly stupid that a man is mercilessly laughed at for actually doing his best to learn his business. However, it need not get into the papers.”

“Of course you would never mention it.”

“Of course, nor Samson either. I can promise that sincerely.”

He took the lessons. Samson made my friend *pose* himself properly; rendered his voice flexible; strengthened it; got him to read pages and pages of Bossuet<sup>53</sup>, Massil-



lon<sup>54</sup>, Bourdaloue<sup>55</sup>. He accustomed him to begin slowly and with a low voice. Nothing like speaking in a low voice to command silence. They stop talking to hear what you say, and they end by listening. Such wise lessons bore their natural fruit. Within six months my young friend was a Cabinet minister, not a great minister indeed, but a good business minister, a minister always to be found in his office, a minister that always makes a point of reading whatever he signs. He represented in the Cabinet what is called the serious-sensible element.

Now I ask of you to profit by this example. Are many of you likely to be Cabinet ministers? That I don't know, but I do know that many of you, as professors and teachers, will be compelled to speak at least an hour or two every day. Several of you will present yourselves at political meetings as candidates for the legislature, or for other offices in the power of the people. Here, as you know, a good deal of talking has to be done, and, as everybody knows, what is said depends pretty much for its importance altogether on the manner of saying it. Prepare yourself therefore, young man. Arm yourself beforehand for the encounter. Remember that you can rule the public only on condition that you can successfully rule yourself when you face it. And this you can never do unless you render yourself complete master of your voice !

To render yourself a complete master of your voice, I see no better way than to take an elocution teacher. Better still, take two. Besides taking the regular lessons from one professor, if we want to understand our subject thoroughly, we must go over it again carefully and often with a rehearsing teacher. That you all know. But in the present case, the rehearsing teacher must be the pupil himself! To the lessons you have received, unite the clos-

est personal attention and observation. Study everything that can give instruction. Watch faces as well as listen to voices. Seek after true intonations almost as carefully as you seek after truth itself. Study in particular the accents and the enunciations of children.

Here a singular fact strikes us. Children are splendid elocution teachers. How true, how pure, how just their intonations! Their flexible young organs, readily accommodating themselves to every variety of sensation, enable them to reach more daring inflexions than the ablest actor would ever dream of. Have you ever listened attentively to a little girl telling some secret that she has discovered, describing some mysterious scene that she has just witnessed? Does n't she remind you of little *Louise* talking so innocently to her father in the *Malade Imaginaire*? She imitates every voice. She reproduces every tone. You see the personages pass before you. You actually hear them talk! Well, just as she has got through with her story, ask her to read the very same little *Louise's* part in Molière, or a few of *Joas's* verses in *Athalie*. You are astounded. What has become of her naturalness? Where are those tones so varied and so appropriate? You hear nothing but the sing-song, tiresome, stupid monotony so peculiar to the reading of school children. These great professors of elocution have not the first idea of a principle of their art!

As an example just in point, I can cite an instance in my own experience which may throw some light on the subject in hand.

In my play of *Louise de Lignerolles*, so often already alluded to, a part of some importance had to be taken by a little girl. It was given to a pretty child of ten, very graceful and full of intelligence. On the day of dress

rehearsal my little actress accomplished wonders. A gentleman seated near me applauded her rapturously, and could not help exclaiming every moment :

“How perfectly true to nature the little thing is? How thoroughly artless! How beautifully simple! It is easy enough to see that none of your elocution teachers have ever got hold of *her*!”

The critic was fully as wrong in his conclusions as critic can well be. For a whole month I had hardly done anything else but teach the child her part, word by word, tone by tone. Was the part one above her age? By no means. Some of the very tones I taught her I had actually learned from my little actress herself. Like all children, when giving way to her emotions, she had created them instinctively. But the instant one of these original tones came into her part, the instant she began to read one of her own characteristic phrases, her naturalness vanished like smoke. What she had said with wonderful grace when speaking on her own account, she said coldly and even with incorrect expression the moment she began to speak for another. In fact, it cost me a good deal of time, patience, and labor to bring her back to what she really was, and to make her learn over again the very tones that she herself had taught me.

This, I think, shows pretty clearly how much of an art reading is. We have to teach it even to those from whom we ourselves have learned it!

I now come to the most interesting part of our study — Reading regarded as a means of literary appreciation.

# PROPERTY OF DEPARTMENT OF DRAMATIC ART

## CHAPTER II.

### *READING AS A MEANS OF CRITICISM.*

ONE day, after a long conversation with my friend Sainte Beuve<sup>56</sup>, in which I had fully explained all my views on the subject, my companion observed :

“At that rate then a good reader should be a good critic.”

“Undoubtedly,” replied I. “Whether you intended it or not, you have certainly given utterance to a great truth. For in what does a reader’s talent consist? It consists in properly and justly rendering the beauties of the work which he undertakes to interpret. Now to render them properly and justly, he must understand them fully, and here comes the curious part of the question. It is only in consequence of his attempts to render these beauties as they ought to be rendered that he succeeds in understanding them as they ought to be understood! Reading aloud gives us a power of analysis to which we could never attain by reading in silence.”

Sainte Beuve asking for a few illustrative examples, I immediately gave him as a strong case in point Racine’s well known academical discourse on Corneille.

With this famous discourse all men of literary culture are intimately acquainted. One passage in it is particularly striking—the comparison between the state of things in the *Théâtre-Français* before Corneille’s time and after it. This passage I had often read in silence and

always with very great admiration ; but one day, on attempting to read it aloud, I was suddenly stopped short by a difficulty in the execution so great and so strange that it set me at once a-thinking. The first part was all simple and easy enough, but the second part seemed heavy, involved, and almost impossible to be read properly. It seemed to be dragged after Fontaine's lumbering stage-coach. It consists of no less than seventeen printed lines, and these seventeen printed lines form but one single sentence. One single sentence without a moment's pause ! No period, no colon, not even a semicolon. Nothing but commas ; while interlacing phrases, succeeding each other continuously and springing up anew at every turn of the sentence, prolonged it unintermittingly to its final end, and compelled you, though panting for breath, to follow up its meaning into all the ramifications of its winding sinuosities. When I found myself at the end at last, I felt somewhat like a broken-winded horse, but, as I said before, the very strangeness of the thing set me reflecting.

"Why in the world," I asked myself, "did Racine take the trouble to compose a sentence so exceedingly long, so laboriously complicated, but withal so artfully put together?"

My eye falls again on the first part of the passage. Hello ! what do I see there ? Absolutely the most complete contrast ! Seven sentences in nine lines ! Exclamation points everywhere ! Verbs nowhere ! A style abrupt, dislocated ! Nothing finished ! Nothing but fragments, chips, shapeless blocks ! — Ah ! I have it ! I utter a cry of joy ! The riddle is perfectly clear !

Wishing to represent the opposite condition of the French theatre before and after Corneille, Racine had



wanted to do more than merely describe them — he had painted them! To bring before our senses as well as our imaginations what he calls the chaos of dramatic poetry, he purposely employs a style that is violent, abrupt, void of art, without toning, without transition! But, to give us a visible picture of the stage as Corneille had created it, he constructs one long sentence, where phrases are strung on phrases, mutually linked together, and mutually sustaining each other, where everything is in harmony, unity and totality, where, in short, everything is co-ordinated, subordinated and highly elaborated. Such were Corneille's tragedies of *Polycutes* and *Rodoguna*, in which, as we all know, the author prided himself on the artful, as well as the striking, display of incident and the gradual, as well as the powerful, development of character.

This clue once in hand, I took up the passage and read it over again. Suppose you read it for yourself, and judge if I was right.

“When Corneille began his labors, in what a condition was the French stage! How disorderly! How irregular! No taste! No true idea of the real and permanent attractions of the drama! The authors as ignorant as the spectators; the subjects mostly extravagant and improbable; no sketch of manners; no attempt at peculiarities of character; the language even worse than the incident; the principal ornament vulgar jokes and miserable puns; in a word, every rule of art, not excepting even those of common decency and propriety, regularly and outrageously violated.

“Into this infancy, or rather into this chaos, of our dramatic French poetry, Corneille, after having lost some time in looking for the right road, after waging a deadly encounter, if I may say so, with the bad taste of the times,



inspired by an extraordinary genius, and powerfully stimulated by a profound study of the Greek dramatists, endeavored to infuse some order by introducing good sense on the stage, not bare, cold, unattractive good sense, but good sense accompanied by all the pomp and splendor of which our language is capable, and, by weaving together into happy union the startling and the probable, he soon left all his rivals so far behind him that the greater number, despairing of ever being able to cope with him successfully, and no longer even daring to enter the lists, confined themselves to railing against the public voice so loudly raised in his favor, and to endeavoring in vain by their shallow discourses and silly criticisms to blacken a merit to which they themselves could never dream of aspiring."

There! Is not that enough to test the truth of my proposition and to render its demonstration irrefutable? To get the true sense of a passage, read it aloud. Then it shines with a new light. Then alone the author's idea stands completely revealed!

Shall I add that the proper reading of such a sentence as this presents difficulty enough to be entitled to be called a lesson? In fact, I know hardly anything more trying and therefore more really useful than to conduct successfully to its end this terribly unwieldy sentence of seventeen printed lines. No resting on the way, remember; no signs of fatigue or absent-mindedness; always showing by the winding intonations of your voice that the sentence is not yet ended, and sustaining it to the last so skilfully and with such variety of expression that it can unroll itself before the hearer's understanding in all its amplitude and majestic flexibility!

That day, I must confess, my reading studies bore some fruit, and I redoubled my thanks to an art which, by compelling me to fully understand this fine passage in all its bearings, convinced me that reading aloud was the only means whereby to render it intelligibly and therefore with proper effect either to ourselves or to our audience.

But I was indebted to our art for a pleasure still greater. Reading aloud enabled me to comprehend more deeply and appreciate more keenly the genius of our two greatest prose writers, Bossuet and Pascal<sup>57</sup>.

## CHAPTER III.

### *BOSSUET AND PASCAL.*

I N Brittany last year, at Arradon on the shores of the picturesque Morbihan, I was spending a few days with the afflicted family of my very dear and much lamented friend Patin who had died only a few months before. The best way to soothe a sufferer's grief is to talk to him about it as often as possible. Every one of those lovely afternoons I used to collect my group of mourners under the shade of a majestic chestnut-tree, and there in full view of the isle-studded "sea" we read together passages from the great writers that were poor Patin's chief favorites.

One day, after a powerful and affecting passage from Bossuet, some member of the little company undertook to read a letter from Pascal on homicide. What a contrast! What an exceedingly different impression! Precisely as much as Bossuet had inspired our friends with enthusiasm, precisely so much did Pascal chill them, I may even say, so much did Pascal weary them. I took the book out of the reader's hands, observing with a smile:

"What a fall for Pascal! But whose the fault? Certainly not Pascal's, and hardly that of the listeners."

"Whose then?" he asked pleasantly. "Mine?"

"The reader's."

"How do you make that out?"

“Easily enough: you simply read Pascal as you had read Bossuet.”

“Well, suppose I did? Are n’t they both —?”

“Yes, they are both sublime authors; they both write with undoubted genius; but in temperament and method both are diametrically opposite. Bossuet, even when writing at his very best, is only speaking; in every one of his lines we hear the tones of the human voice; in every one of his sentences, however long or labored it may be, we can always detect the breathing and the movement of speech; never has writer been more of a painter and more of a poet. But painter and poet are both fused in him into a third person, dominating over them all, the orator!

“In Pascal, on the contrary, this third person is the geometrician. Pascal too is a painter and a poet. But though the poet and the painter color his phrases, it is the geometrician that constructs his sentences. Bossuet’s sentences are winged, they fly like an eagle; Pascal’s sentences are a theorem, and develop themselves like a theorem: they always advance but never run! Now, Mr. Reader, what have you been trying to do? To fly! to run! nothing less! This wonderful style of Pascal’s you have actually succeeded in making dull and heavy, simply because you tried to make it light and airy! Here! Please listen for a minute or two while I endeavor to express by a slight change of style the alluring charms of a writer who, though ever eloquent, is never an orator!”

Then without much hurrying, with very little pausing, I set myself to represent that force which gains new strength as it progresses, *vires acquirit eundo*, like a squadron of heavy cavalry, advancing with accelerated motion, and making the earth tremble under the continuous pressure

of an onward movement, heavy, uninterrupted, resistless !

My proof, I need not say, was far from complete, my efforts as a reader being far from perfect, but I had the satisfaction of convincing my friends of the truth of my observations and, when the reading was over, we all bore away, well engraved on our memories, clearer, better defined and more correct portraits of these two great masters of French prose.

## CHAPTER IV.

### HOW READING REVEALS.

EVERY rose has its thorn. Even reading aloud is not without its disillusion. If it discovers beauties, it detects faults as well. As Sainte Beuve has phrased it, "A reader aloud is at once a critic and a judge." Yes, a stern and severe judge, with an eye quick to alight on unsuspected weaknesses.

What wretched discoveries of the kind have I fallen upon myself even unawares! How many writers and writings that I used to admire passionately, that possibly you admire passionately now, I have found totally unable to stand this terrible test! A French phrase describing a self-evident thing says, *it jumps into your eyes*; it would be just as correct to say *it jumps into your ears*. Eyes hurry hastily over the page, skipping lightly over the weak spots, instinctively avoiding the dangerous. But ears catch everything. Ears make no skips! Ears have sensibilities, susceptibilities, penetrations, of which eyes are totally incapable! The little word which, read in silence, slipped past us unawares, when read aloud, suddenly assumes enormous proportions! The expression which your eye had scarcely noticed, is absolutely shocking to your ear! And the more numerous is the audience listening to the reader, the keener and more sensitive is that reader's clairvoyant insight!

The fact is, as soon as a reader begins his discourse, an



electric current is instantly established between him and his hearers, a current of mutual reaction and mutual instruction. The reader by enkindling the others enkindles himself; he blazes in their reflected light. No murmurs of impatience, no mutterings of inattention are necessary to give him warning. A certain kind of silence is language enough for him. Conscious of their impressibility, he feels that a certain passage will displease them, must displease them, long before he comes to it—we should not be far out if we said that his critical faculty, thoroughly aroused and highly excited by this thrilling contact with a public audience, has really become a kind of divination.

Shall I confess that the experiment of reading aloud one day suddenly destroyed one of the dearest and most charming of my youthful enthusiasms? A writer whom I had always set up high in the first rank, had to step down unceremoniously to the second. I admire him still; eloquent and pathetic I shall always acknowledge him to be, but his name is no longer on the list of my great gods. It is to Massillon that I allude.

Massillon, in my opinion, has a magnificent treasury of words, but an extraordinary dearth of phraseology. His vocabulary is truly royal, but his skill in employing it has little variety or breadth. Bossuet's style is continually relieved by new and unexpected turns of expression, which stamp every sentence with a peculiar and striking cast of countenance. In *La Fontaine*<sup>58</sup>, so many verses, so many different styles of thought. But once Massillon hits on a certain kind of sentence, he holds on to it with a death-grip, page after page. Like a horse-car unable to leave its tramway, like a canal-boat which cannot quit its canal, on he goes, without turning an inch to the right or left, and on you go with him. What is the consequence? A

monotony, that at last palls on the ear and actually stops the reader. Besides, even the splendid profusion of his words is not without its uniformity. His incomparable talent of setting forth a single thought under such a variety of shapes had for a long time astounded me, dazzled me. I used to take for a new idea what was nothing but the same idea presented again and again under various different forms. But reading aloud soon convinced me that there was something artificial in this exuberant display. I began to feel as you feel at one of those pieces where the same actor pretends to represent five or six different personages, whereas in reality the only thing changed is the costume.

Take a page of Saint-Simon<sup>59</sup> if you want to realize more fully the idea that I wish to convey. He too repeats the same idea under twenty different shapes, but he does so as a clever magician turns one object into fifty by the blazing reflection of dazzling mirrors; he does so with the fire and heat of a man who, under the influence of a burning impression, always considers his expressions too feeble to adequately represent his ideas. He fights and struggles with his words to compel them to express what he means. He whips his language, spurs it, tortures it, drives it, overloads it, until at last it obeys him and becomes just as passionate, fiery, and headlong as himself!

I have often tried to read Saint-Simon aloud, but never, I must acknowledge, with more than indifferent success. In the reading line I know of no harder kind of work or anything at the same time more interesting than a lively, rough and tumble, body to body, tug with this terrible giant. It is Jacob's struggle with the angel. You are sure to be conquered. But your very defeat has done you good; it has given you more nerve and a readier confidence in attempting new encounters.

## CHAPTER V.

### *A DISILLUSION.*

PERHAPS the best name for our little work would be: *Memoirs of a Reader*. Its principles and chief points are certainly presented under forms of my own personal experience, and, deriving my ideas as I do from absolute realities, I endeavor to make them as vivid as possible by giving in detail all the circumstances to which they are indebted for their origin.

Buffon<sup>60</sup> says: "Style is nothing but the order and the movement in which our thoughts run," and this definition embodies one of the fundamental rules of the art of reading. The first thing therefore to be done by a reader, when he enters on the study of a new piece, is to look after its order so as to be able to determine its movement — movement being in reality no more than animated order. He must discover the plan underlying the structure, the sketch beneath the picture, the framework beneath the edifice, and thus arrive at the great original trace-lines.

The consequence of all this labor is perfectly natural. The reader's insight becomes amazing. No one penetrates more deeply into the secrets of the composition. Many a defect in unity, many a fault in harmony, which the gloss of execution and the glare of detail keep completely concealed from the eye of the multitude, force themselves irresistibly on the notice of the reader. Of this truth I had

but a partial glimpse for a long time, but it was brought before me at last in all its power with an evidence that really there was no gainsaying.

Delaunay, of the *Comedie Française*<sup>45</sup>, favored me with his company one day at dinner. During the evening he said, in the course of conversation :

“Have you any objection to my attempting before your friends a little recitation in poetry that I have never given elsewhere? It pleases myself so much that I have studied it with delight; I think I have discovered new effects in it, but, not having as yet put it to the test, I am in some doubt.”

“To what piece do you allude?” I asked.

“Well, it is a piece that, I acknowledge, has little in common with a pleasant company assembled together after a lively dinner. Still, even the spice of danger tempts me.”

“What is it anyway?”

“*Hope in God*, by Alfred de Musset<sup>61</sup>.”

“Bravo!” I exclaimed. “These lines I have read myself more than once, and not without having experienced a pleasing impression. Beauties of the first order — verses little short of immortal! Come, begin! I vouch for your success!”

His success in fact was decided; the end of the piece particularly, the Prayer, produced a profound and general emotion. Never before had the charming interpreter of *The October Night*, and *No Jestings with Love*, so much enraptured me. His voice was delightfully sweet and soft. He did not speak — he prayed! He prayed, just as people sing — but he was very far from singing — he pursued the charming path that lies midway between majestic speech and melting music. It was, in fact, a hymn of youth, or

rather of youthfulness — his accents revealed all the touching weakness of sublime immaturity — we were all moved to tears.

Starting for the shores of Brittany, three months afterwards, I took care to carry my *Musset* along, determined to learn in my turn how to recite *Hope in God*. The very first day of my arrival I set myself to work. There I was, strolling among the rocks, my ears ringing with the grand bass of the “far-resounding sea,” as I recited aloud these splendid verses. I say *recited*, not *read*, but *recited*, for one of the advantages of our art — I say *our* art — for I hope it will soon become yours, — one of its many advantages is that it helps to people our memory with many a grand passage from immortal works. *Reading* these is not enough — we must *say* them . . . . *repeat* them . . . . *recite* them at every moment that the humor takes us, at every moment that we have the opportunity! Down on the books that you must be always dragging along! Be independent of them! Be able to do without them! Or rather, carry your books in your head! That’s the way to start on a summer trip! You are, to all appearance, solitary and alone. You appear to undertake it without inviting a single one of your silent but eloquent company. Nevertheless, you are surrounded by a troop of such friends as Lamartine<sup>62</sup>, Corneille, La Fontaine, Victor Hugo<sup>63</sup>. With them we hold pleasant converse in the depths of the forest shades; with them we talk about our own daring lines; with them we pass hours and hours of delightful intercourse, hunting after some fleeting emotional tone, tender and true, finding it at last, announcing the discovery with delight and asking them how they are pleased with our success.

This is certainly what I did with De Musset’s *Hope in God*. Never before had I learned anything with greater



facility or pleasure than the first two parts of the poem. These admirable lines I read and pondered over until I felt them entering my memory like arrows rapid, keen, and barbed! Two or three recitals were quite sufficient to commit them perfectly.

All those grand phrases that flash through the first parts like vivid lightnings over a stormy sky:

Hope, deathless, vast inspires a gasping world

I cannot! The Infinite overwhelms me!

Of woman born, of high or low degree,  
Humanity's steel chain forever binds us! —

—all these became delightful subjects for study. I revelled in my happiness and often caught myself saying:

“But what's all this in comparison to the Prayer?”

I came to the Prayer. Oh! what a disappointment! What a disillusion.

I begin the Prayer — not one single accent can I find true. I try to learn it by heart. I can't learn it by heart! The words resist me, escape me! I am somewhat disturbed, I begin to discredit my judgment, my taste, but I renew the attack with fresh vigor — still the same indomitable resistance! The moment I begin it, I find a coolness taking possession of me in spite of myself. As much as the powerful painting of the pangs of Doubt, of the vanity of mere Human systems had filled me with delight and enthralled me with admiration, just so much did this appeal to Faith now leave me unmoved, indifferent, chilled.

I pursue my studies further. I examine this “Prayer,” word for word, and, by degrees, hiding themselves here and there behind occasional lines of an emotion really



touching and finely expressed, I discover a good many, too many of our conventional commonplace verses, *chœurs des anges, les celestes louanges, concerts de joie et de l'amour* (angel choirs, celestial praise, concerts of joy and love etc.).

Now I have always remarked that *blemishes* are really *faults*, that is to say, failures in execution generally proceed from defects in the composition. When you feel a great writer's style suddenly growing feebler, you may conclude at once that his flow of ideas is becoming feebler too. Pursuing my investigation, therefore, I soon discovered that, "not to put too fine a point on it," this sublime "Prayer," this grand apostrophe to God, this "heart-rent" cry to God, this "impassioned" appeal to God, could be summed up into something hardly better than a commonplace wish, a puerile demand, a proposition strongly partaking of the silly. The poet asks the Creator to rend asunder the vast vaults of the firmament, to tear away all abstracting veils—to show Himself in fact, and then the poet promises HIM, in exchange for all this—what?—the respect and love of man! "Be good," he says to the OMNIPOTENT ONE, as he would say it to a fretful child, "and we shall love you ever so much!"

No wonder then that, the sandy foundations of the poem suddenly giving way, the whole edifice collapsed before me in an instant. Its plan was radically vicious. The first part has really no connexion with the second part. The poet of the beginning has nothing to do with the poet of the end—they are really two different men! of two different ages! The writer of the first part might be thirty years old, the writer of the second could be no more than fourteen. The towering portal of magnificent proportions admits us into insignificant little chambers, mean, cramped,

and even bare in spite of their tawdry furniture. Here, as often elsewhere, De Musset fails in the grand flight! His wings flutter nervously on the ground instead of bearing him majestically on high! His own verses describe him perfectly:

Et puisque le désir se sent cloué sur terre,  
Comme un aigle blessé qui meurt dans la poussière,  
L'aile ouverte, et les yeux fixés sur le soleil.

(Pinned to the earth by spear of wild Desire,  
Still heavenward ever he turns a wistful gaze;  
So the pierced eagle, writhing in the sand,  
Flaps a weak wing and struggles tow'rds the Sun.)

Poor De Musset was an eagle too, but an eagle mortally wounded! He too flapped a weak wing, but desire kept him nailed to earth. He too struggled towards the Sun, but never reached the azure serene. For the close of such a poem, a very different cry of Love and Faith was required. A bound upwards was required that took you at once in aerial flight far above all human systems, upwards, onwards, to the very throne of God Himself! And such a cry has been uttered! It still exists! Here it is:

Pour moi, quand je verrais, dans les celestes plaines, etc.\*

\* The following is the passage in full:

Pour moi, quand je verrais, dans les celestes plaines,  
Les astres, s'écartant de leurs routes certaines,  
Dans les champs de l'éther l'un par l'autre heurtés,  
Parcourir par hazard les cieux épouvantés;  
Quand j'entendrais gémir et se briser la terre,  
Quand je verrais son globe errant et solitaire,  
Flottant loin des soleils, pleurant l'homme détruit,  
Se perdre dans les champs de l'éternelle nuit;  
Et, quand, dernier témoin de ces scènes funèbres,  
Entouré du chaos, de la mort, des ténèbres,

[Translation :

Nay! Should Creation to chaos dread return,  
 Sweet daylight die, the sun forget to burn,  
 The stars, abandoning their paths on high,  
 Jostle, and burst, and shoot along the sky;  
 Should Earth from guiding orbit blindly break  
 And straight for the realms of Night eternal make,  
 Far from the suns; far from the genial air,  
 Sobbing a wail of impotent despair  
 For lost humanity; even then should I,  
 Last of our race, be left alone to die,  
 Naught staring round but chaos, horror, death,  
 Even then would I *hope*, still would my latest breath  
 Proclaim undying confidence in Thee,  
 My God, great, mercy-loving Deity!  
 Mid wreck-strewn plains of space, unterrified  
 Thee would I bless, in Thy loved will confide,  
 Sure that Thy hands benign would soon restore  
 Light, Love, and Order to Thy worlds once more!]

This passage is the real dome of De Musset's edifice. But De Musset did not write it! Who did? Alphonse de Lamartine! And this is the reason why to me, in spite of the many graces undoubtedly possessed by the singer of *Rolla*, the poet of the *Meditations* is by far a greater favorite.

Here I fancy I hear you whispering to each other: you are probably saying:

"Delaunay then must have trapped you all very nicely! He extracted your tears by means of verses of inferior construction! Is the Art of Reading then an art of deception? Can a Reader, like a Lawyer, prove the wrong to be right?"

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Seul je serais debout; seul, malgré mon effroi,  
 ÊTRE infaillible et bon, j'espérerais en toi;  
 Et certain du retour de l'éternelle aurore,  
 Sur les mondes détruits, je t'attendrais encore!

An answer to this is easy. That a Reader, who knows his business, has a perfect right to bring out the beauties of his subject into the strongest relief, and at the same time do all he can to diminish its defects, does not admit of a shadow of doubt; but this liberty is allowable only when he has realized these beauties himself and discovered these defects himself. Us therefore he may dupe occasionally but himself never!

Some time afterwards I told Delaunay of my disillusion.

"It does not at all surprise me," was his reply. "I had myself detected that very flaw which you found so displeasing and had readily seen that the first part of the composition was much superior to the second. But I had also discovered that this Prayer, which you must acknowledge really contains several very touching lines, was capable of some new and telling effects. I expected it to move you; as it had moved me, by its very suggestions of human weakness. I contrived to exert my art in abridging a little of the first part, in toning it down somewhat, so as to be able to set the second in stronger light."

You see then that Delaunay had not really entrapped us into unwarranted emotion. He had simply improved on his author, and this he could have done only on the condition of not being entrapped himself.

—Which brings us back to our first principle:

*The best way to understand a work is to read it aloud.*

## CHAPTER VI.

### *READING POETRY.*

DE MUSSET'S name has naturally brought us to an important question in the study of our subject: the application of the art of Reading to poetry.

How are verses to be read?

Judging by what is usually done, even on the stage, the grand art of reading poetry consists in making the audience think you are reading prose. I was sitting one evening in a theatre, quite close to a box occupied by two ladies elegantly dressed and evidently of some distinction. All at once one of them exclaims:

“Good gracious! They’re giving us verses!”

And up they rise and out they go.

For the loss of their company the actor certainly was not to be blamed; he had taken all kinds of pains to conceal the monster; he had so successfully broken up, dislocated and chopped the lines to pieces that the “poetry” reminded me of some murdered hero’s body so gashed and disfigured by wounds that his own mother could not have recognized him.

The amateurs naturally and blindly imitate the artists. Indeed they can’t very well do anything else. We know only what we have learned, and very few suspect that here anything *is* to be learned. I have never heard poetry read in public without being astonished unto admiration at the innumerable methods by which people contrive to



read it badly. Some, suffering from I know not what incomprehensible nightmare of harmony, conceive it to be their conscientious and inexcusable duty to envelope their verses in a sort of unctuous rhapsodical singsong, killing off all the rhymes, softening off all the outlines, shading off all the movements, until they succeed at last very thoroughly in producing upon the listener the same nauseous impression as you experience when you take some insipid greasy draught. Others again, laboring under the delusion that everything should be sacrificed for the sake of "truth," never seem to give themselves the least concern whatever regarding either the rhythm, the rhyme, or the prosody; and, when they unfortunately remember that the cesura should be somewhere about the sixth foot, they always contrive to make a pause in the very spot where, of all places in the world, a pause is sure to make the whole verse ridiculous.

In opposition to these strange errors, allow me to present you with three maxims, absolute and final, the truth of which I shall prove by the simplest examples:

1. The Art of Reading is never so difficult and never so necessary as when it is applied to poetry. Only long and careful study can make you a proficient.

2. You must read verses as verses, and poetry with the ear of a poet.

3. The interpreter of poets must become their confidant; that is, they must reveal to him what they reveal to no other.

To demonstrate these three axioms, one poet and one alone may be taken, *La Fontaine*.

The little detail I am now about to give must not be considered a digression; in fact it will be only a shorter and pleasanter path to take you where I want you to go.



La Fontaine was the first book in which I took reading lessons. My master was a man of talent—perhaps he even had too much talent—with a charming voice, of which he certainly made a sensible use, and with a play of features, of which he just as certainly took considerably too much advantage. He gave me, however, two lessons of great and equal utility, from which I hope you may profit just as much as I did. He told me both what a reader should always attempt to do, and what he should always carefully avoid.

He had to read some fables of La Fontaine one morning at the Conservatory before some literary assembly; on the way he called in on me, and said :

“Come and see how a reader that knows his business presents himself before a large audience. That you may profit the more from it, here is the programme :

“I begin by giving the assembly a sweeping glance. This glance, circular, comprehensive, and accompanied by a half smile lightly pencilled on the lips, must be of an agreeable and amiable character. Its object is to conciliate the good-will of the audience, to make a collection of their sympathies and regards, and particularly, to make yourself the central point of attraction for all eyes. Then you clear your throat a little—hm ! hm !—as if you were going to begin—but you don’t begin !—not yet !—you wait until the silence is as still as death. Then you advance your arm—your right arm, mind—with a graceful curve of the elbow—never forget that—the elbow is the soul of the arm ! Attention redoubled. You announce the title. You announce it simply, aiming at no effect, playing programme as it were—*The Oak and the Reed*. You begin : *The OAK*—here your voice must be round and full ! The intonation, however, must be dampened a

bit! Your gesture must be noble and somewhat emphatic! You're describing a giant, you know, his head in the clouds, his feet in the regions of eternal death!

"The OAK, one day said to the REED.

"Remember! Hardly any voice at all in pronouncing the word *Reed*! Let your intonation belittle him, squeeze him, crush him, the wretched vegetable! Despise him, throw up your nose at him, give him a contemptuous glance over your shoulder—all this in a masterly way, you know—with a low, smothered voice as if you were looking down on him from a great distance——"

—What! tittering? Well, I don't wonder! But how heartily you would laugh if I proceeded to show you how my respected preceptor, Monsieur Febvé, read the line:

*Regardaient rôti des marrons —*

He actually made the five *r*'s roll and rattle on his tongue in imitation of the chestnuts crackling and sputtering before the fire! Absurd, you say, ridiculous, silly. Well, the absurdity, the ridiculousness, the silliness I don't deny. But I tell you that in spite of absurdity, ridiculousness, silliness, my preceptor's remarks contained much that was profound, just, truthful! Nothing is more unquestionable than that you must not begin to read the instant you mount the platform, or that you must endeavor by a certain glance to put yourself in communication with your audience, or that you must announce your title simply, unostentatiously, distinctly, and that you must try to represent, to realize, to paint and reproduce, as it were, your different personages by the varying intonations of your voice. In short, if you only suppress my preceptor's fantastic, perhaps peculiar, exaggerations, affectations, and far-fetched strains

after the impossible, you can draw from his instructions an excellent and highly useful lesson.

About the manner of reading fables, we must now make a few remarks. The ordinary opinion is so prevalent as to have become an axiom: *Fables should be read simply*. Simply—no doubt. But what do you mean by simply? Do you mean smoothly, unvaryingly, or, in short, prosily? You do? Well, then I am sorry to be compelled to differ with you *in toto*. That is not reading La Fontaine, it is killing him! *Traduttore traditore!* It is not translating him, it is betraying him! La Fontaine is the most involved poet of the French language. No writer unites in one single individual so many contrarieties. No poetry is so rich in opposition! His well-earned nickname of *Bonhomme* (simpleton), his well-known reputation for “verdancy,” the thousand and one anecdotes told of his fits of abstraction, have all somewhat blinded us with regard to his unquestioned genius. The *man* has set us all wrong in estimating the *poet*. Of the simplest manners? Yes. As an individual, somewhat eccentric, possibly foolish? Granted. But put a pen into the hand of this simpleton, this Poor Poll—he is simpleton no longer! He is the quickest, the deepest, the sharpest, the knowingest! We are nothing beside him! We are simple amateurs; he is the most accomplished of artists! He has himself revealed his secret:

*Tandis que sous mes cheveux blancs  
Je fabrique à force de temps,  
Des vers moins sensés que la prose.*

(Whilst in my old age I manufacture with time and care verses hardly as sensible as prose.)

*I manufacture!* Do you understand the word? Does it

not pretty well express effort, energy, powerful will? In fact, with La Fontaine everything is carefully calculated beforehand, premeditated, sought after with effort, while, at the same time, by a miraculous gift, everything is harmonious, flexible, natural! Art everywhere, the artful nowhere! What is the key to this wondrous union? His delightful simplicity of heart naturally passes into his verses, and then fuses itself so thoroughly with his great literary talent that, while his knowledge enables him to represent simplicity with consummate skill, his simplicity imparts its own airy gracefulness to knowledge.

Another contrast, another difficulty, and consequently another merit. In La Fontaine all extremes meet. Side by side, in the closest union, stand tones the most dissimilar, emotion, humor, power, grandeur, dignity, familiarity, Gallic joviality, all elbowing each other incessantly, and all present everywhere in every one of his poems. No writer that I know of has succeeded so perfectly in packing so much value into so small a space! One single line, often one single word of his, is sufficient to open out to your gaze far extending horizons! Painter incomparable! Narrator incomparable! Creator of original characters, hardly inferior to Molière himself! And you think all this can be rendered simply, unvaryingly, prosily, without effort? I tell you again that it cannot! No. It is only after deep and careful study that a reader may begin to think that he understands even imperfectly, much less undertake to make others understand, an art so profound and so elaborate.

My expressions, I confess, want clearness: to illustrate them, let us take the fable of

## THE HERON.

*Un jour, sur ses longs pieds allait, je ne sais où,  
Le héron au long bec emmanché d'un long cou.*

(One day, the Heron was going somewhere on his long legs, his long bill swinging at the end of his long neck.)

Any one can see here that the triple repetition of the word *long* is a pictorial effect which the reader should attempt to render.

*Il côtoyait une rivière;  
L'onde était transparente ainsi qu' aux plus beaux jours.*

(He was stalking alongside a brook, whose waters were as transparent as waters can be in the most lovely weather.)

Should these two lines be read in the same way? By no means. The first, being simple narrative, should be read simply. The second is a painter's line; the image must be rendered as visible by the reader's tongue as by the poet's pen.

*Ma commère la carpe y faisait mille tours  
Avec le brochet son compère!*

(There frolicked together Dame Carp with her old crony Beau Pike!)

You don't know your business very well here unless you contrive to throw into your voice a lively, joyous, sportive, lightly jesting expression, suggestive of the jovial fun of the rollicking pair.

*Le héron en eût fait aisément son profit;  
Tous s'approchaient du bord; l'oiseau n'avait que prendre.*

(The heron could have easily gobbled them up; they touched the bank every now and then; he had but to stoop.)

Simple narration all this, nothing more.

*Mais il crut mieux faire d'attendre  
Qu'il eût un peu plus d'appétit.*

(But he was in no hurry. By and by would serve just as well.



Deferring could do no possible harm; on the contrary, it would enable him to enjoy his meal with better appetite.)

Attention! Character begins to develop! Mr. Heron seems to be somewhat nice in his tastes, an epicure, however, not at all a glutton. To delicate stomachs appetite is a highly prized pleasure. Remember then to give the word *appetite* a decided accentuation, an emphasis savory, suggestive of *tidbits*, toothsome, melting, *piquant*. In a moment you will see why.

*Il vivait de régime et mangeait à ses heures.*

(He followed a prescribed diet and for his meals he strictly took his own time.)

Second sketch of character! Mr. Heron is an important member of society, an object of proper pride to himself and his numerous friends; he deserves our most respectful attention and sympathy.

*Au bout de quelque temps l'appétit vint —*

(After a charming promenade appetite's delightful sensation began to tickle him.)

Happy Mr. Heron!

*L'oiseau*

*S'approchant du bord vit sur l'eau*

*Des tanches qui sortaient du fond de leurs demeures.*

(Drawing near the brink, he contemplated the surface fretted by countless tenches, fluttering up by scores from their dark abodes.)

Admirable verses! and worthy of an artist! They fully express the peculiarly picturesque sight you have no doubt often enjoyed, if at all a disciple of the gentle craft, at witnessing first the shadows, then the dim outlines, then the numberless fishes themselves, as they swarm up from the swaying weeds at the bottom and throw into gentle ebullition the sparkling waters of the crystal stream! Paint this! Paint it all with your voice!



*Ce mets ne lui plut pas, il s'attendait à mieux,  
Il montrait un goût dédaigneux,  
Comme le rat du bon Horace.*

(No, thank you! He reserves himself for something better! Like the rat in the fable, Mr. Heron turns up a disdainful nose.)

*Moi, des tanches! dit-il, moi, héron, que je fasse  
Une si pauvre chère! et pour qui me prend-on?*

(Tenches for me! Me, a Heron! Tenches! What *do* people take me for?)

Aspirate the H well! Lift Mr. Heron high on it! Elevate him aloft on it, hoist him on it as if on another pair of long legs!

*La tanche dédaignée, il trouva du goujon.  
Du goujon! Beau dîner, vraiment, pour un héron!*

(The despised tenches soon disappeared, to be succeeded by nothing better than gudgeons. Gudgeon! One of the Herons to dine on gudgeon! Ha! Ha! Ha!)

The idea is so comical that he can't help bursting into a hearty fit of laughter.

*Que j'ouvre pour si peu le bec! A Dieu ne plaise!  
Il l'ouvrit pour bien moins. Tout alla de façon  
Qu'il ne vit plus aucun poisson.  
La faim le prit.*

(Open my bill for a gudgeon! Never! So help me heaven, never! (Softly, Mr. Heron. You shall open your bill for even less!) Things went on from bad to worse. At last not a single fish was to be seen anywhere. Hunger nipped him.)

Hunger! You see the contrast between *hunger* and *appetite*? Do you suppose La Fontaine wrote without malice premeditation this little half-verse, so clear, yet so terrible in its meaning: *La faim le prit*, (Hunger nipped him)? Not at all. The time for dainty, piquant, savory expressions is past.

Hunger! The word is sharp, clear, cruel, merciless!

It strangles Mr. Heron. It chokes him. A death by starvation stares him in the face ! Render all this by your voice. Paint also the *dénouement* abrupt, disdainful, decisive, pitiless like a statute :

*Il fut tout heureux et tout aise  
De rencontrer un limaçon.*

(Most fortunate at last and particularly lucky did Mr. Heron deem himself when he caught sight of a small, slimy, watery, crawling snail.)

Nearly all La Fontaine's fables afford subjects for similar study, and all the great poets can be studied as well as La Fontaine. Only—and this we must never forget—the modes of reading verse are just as numerous as the modes of writing verse. Racine must not be read like Corneille, nor Molière like Regnard<sup>64</sup>, nor Lamartine like Victor Hugo. Correct elocution varies strictly according to the nature of the genius that it undertakes to interpret. Sink the faults, hurry through or abridge the tedious passages, skip them even if you like, but never attempt to change your author's nature ! A reader who would undertake to deliver *Ruy Blas*, for instance, in what is called a simple unaffected style would deprive the play at one blow of its most predominant characteristic—its richness of coloring. If we are plain with the plain, with the exuberant we must be exuberant—it would never do to copy Rubens<sup>65</sup> with neutral tints. To read an ode as we should read a fable, a lyric strain like a dramatic passage, Lamartine's *Stars* like Florian's<sup>66</sup> *The Blind Man and the Paralytic*, would be simply spreading a gray veil of dull uniformity over the magnificent variety of genius's glittering garden.

But the RULE immutable, inflexible, eternal, applicable to all kinds of poetry, to all kinds of poets—the LAW comprising all laws is this: *When you read a poet, read*

*him as a poet.* Where there is rhythm, let that rhythm be heard! Where there is rhyme, let us be made aware of it! When the verses are painting and music, be a painter and a musician when you read them! In how many passages, for instance, is the intensely pathetic suggested by little more than the melancholy but melodious cadence! Good-natured friends will of course warn you: "Take care!" they will cry, "you're becoming emphatic, declamatory! You're forgetting Nature! You're overstepping the bounds of Truth!" Ah! Truth is infinitely vaster than the narrow brains of pedants can comprehend! Truth is infinitely grander than the merely natural! Truth embraces within her dominions not merely the so-called *Natural*, but everything that the human soul can reach in its highest flight! Whatever is written with consistency and in sincerity is *Truth*, and as Truth should be read! Not of course, the Truth of every-day commonplace experience, nor of cold, plain, practical reason; but the Truth of the soul, quite as real and just as natural as the Truth of the body! When you think of the fertile fancy and burning imagination of Ariosto<sup>67</sup>, what image rises in your mind? The classic Pegasus? Not at all. It is the winged Hippogriff that bore *Astolpho* to the moon! Well then, when you read *Orlando Furioso*, take your seat on that Hippogriff's back and start with him for the dazzling regions beyond the stars!

And this reminds me of a certain kind of poetry not yet spoken of, though closely connected with our study and most completely dependent on art. I mean that kind of poetry which is much more common in French Literature than in English, and is usually known by the name of *Free Verses*.

A conversation of mine with Victor Cousin<sup>68</sup>, will help considerably to bring out my idea.

# PROPERTY OF DEPARTMENT OF DRAMATIC ART

## CHAPTER VII.

### FREE VERSES.

VICTOR COUSIN was the greatest initiator of us all into the grandeurs of the Seventeenth Century, simply because he was its greatest adorer. It would be a calumny, however, to limit his passionate admiration to the fine ladies of that period; he was quite as much captivated by Pascal as by Madame de Longueville<sup>69</sup>, and he would never exchange the great Corneille for the most enchanting of the marchionesses. Still, it cannot be denied that he was not free from the usual fault of fanatics—he considered a single word uttered in disparagement of one of his idols as a personal insult offered to himself; in fact, on such occasions his temper hardly knew any bounds.

At one of our usual sessions in the Academy one day, I happened unfortunately to observe that, out of the fourteen verses composing the introduction to *Baucis and Philemon*, I considered only two to be admirable and that I looked on the rest as absolutely detestable. Cousin darted me a furious glance, but I kept on saying my say:

“Nothing can be finer than such a verse as this:

*La Fortune vend ce qu'on croit qu'elle donne.*

(Fortune but sells what we think she gives.)

“Or this:

*Rien ne trouble sa fin, c'est le soir d'un beau jour.*

(Nothing disturbs his death; it's the close of a lovely day.)

"But," I continued, "as to *gold* and *grandeur* being *divinities* that become *asylums* of *devouring* cares, which in their turn become *vultures represented* by the son of Japhet, etc. — all that I have no hesitation in denouncing as unmitigated stuff and nonsense."

By Jove! I thought Cousin was going to swallow me, body and bones! Most fortunately, however, the session broke up at that moment precisely, and everybody began to leave the room. But Cousin overtook me at the doorway and permitted himself to exclaim as bluntly as you please:

"You're probably conceited enough to imagine you know as much about La Fontaine as I do?"

"Well, I rather think I do," replied I with a smile.

"You're in earnest?"

"Certainly I'm in earnest. I know more of La Fontaine than you do, because you read him silently, whereas I read him aloud."

"Oh! the argument!"

"An excellent argument. Do you want to be convinced of its soundness?"

"Of course I do!"

Off we start down the quays, arm in arm, hotly discussing the question.

"Has not La Fontaine written nearly all his Fables in Free Verses?" I begin.

"Well, suppose he has!"

"First, what are Free Verses?"

"The term itself expresses the meaning perfectly. Free verses are verses that rhyme but that have no regular rhythm."

"Not at all. Free Verses have just as much rhythm as Alexandrine verses or any other verses, only it is, I admit,



a concealed rhythm. Free Verses obey a rule, a mysterious but a real rule, a rule not indeed treated of in the rhetoric books, but nevertheless just as surely existing and always as present in the imagination of all writers of true poetic genius. This is simply the reason why the Free Verses of the Seventeenth Century are excellent whilst those of the Eighteenth, except a few of Voltaire's, are all mediocre. The poets never guessed the secret."

"What secret?" asks Cousin, ever ready to take fire at anything like a dogmatic assertion regarding literature, though now evidently somewhat mollified by my little compliment to his beloved Seventeenth Century. "What secret? What mysterious rule are you talking about? Explain the meaning of your hidden rhythm."

"No easy matter; still — Do you ever take a ride on horseback?"

"Very seldom — scarcely ever."

"That's bad — well — you have no doubt often heard of the famous riding-masters Monsieur Baucher<sup>70</sup> and Monsieur D'Aure?"

"Oh! have n't I? When I was minister, what endless discussions we had as to which of them we should make master of the Saumur school of cavalry. The Minister of War was for Baucher, one of our military men was for D'Aure. Why so? Hang me if I have an idea on the subject!"

"I think I can give you one or two while I am at the same time endeavoring to develop my theory regarding Free Verses."

"*Parbleu!*" cries my companion. "This is something quite original! Poetry illustrated by horse-riding! Go on, my dear sir! I am all attention!"

"Baucher," I resume, "was *par excellence* the Rider of



the Ring. No sight more interesting than that afforded by a horse mounted, that is, subdued, mastered by Baucher. How complete the domination of the man over the animal! Trembling, prancing, palpitating, exulting in his strength though quite conscious of its subjugation, the horse has not a muscle that is not under the most perfect control. The foam flecking him, here and there, the nostrils opening and closing in ardent perturbation, the net-work of swollen veins rising in such high relief all over his body — all betray his life, his strength, his feverish impatience, his hunger after freedom. But no matter for that! Every single one of his movements is rhythmical; every single one of his paces is fore-arranged; inclosed in the unyielding circle of his master's iron limbs, his abounding energy itself becomes the very perfection of subordination!"

"Well;" interrupts my companion, "all this I may not dispute, but what in the world ——"

"Wait a moment. D'Aure, on the contrary, is the dashing rider of the open air. A great difference! What D'Aure requires is plenty of room. What he demands of his horse is the fullest exertion of all his forces. No curbing in, no reining up now; no check-reins, no martingales! spurs, if anything, and a touch of the stinging lash! See the animal speeding past, nose in air, eye aflame, hair and mane streaming in the breeze! Watch him as he skims the plain, fleet as an arrow, light as the wind, graceful as a bird! Who is the master now, the horse or the man? The man as much as ever! His is the direction just as much as the inspiration! He apparently gives the animal the wildest liberty, and yields with pleasure to his fieriest and most uncontrollable impulse; but his fingers never abandon the guiding rein, nor his arm the curbing bit!

So, while Baucher's horse, though a captive, subdued, submissive, is as powerful in his strength as ever, D'Aure's, though apparently independent as the raging blast, is as much under control as the rider's little finger."

"I think I understand you now," said Cousin with a smile. "Baucher's horse is epic or Alexandrine versification, and ——"

"Precisely! and D'Aure's is the rhythm of Free Verses. Here the artist, instead of confining the play of his inspiration within a circle traced beforehand, abandons it to its natural bent, gives it full scope, follows it through all its windings, expresses it in all its mobile plasticity, changes the rhythm with every change of idea, and thus succeeds in imparting more justice, truth, and reality to multitudes of delicate, elegant, airy, and graceful sentiments. But this unrestraint must never degenerate into listlessness or license. The freer from a master is the true artist, the stricter and severer he is towards himself. He is always contriving therefore to relieve the freedom of the rhythm by the number and variety of the rhymes, by bolder and more striking expressions, by newer and more captivating ideas, so that we are always instinctively conscious of power as well as of grace, of severe art as well as of playful negligence. Free Verses, though not a canal with straight banks, are by no means an ocean without coasts. They are rather a river whose shores are winding, flexible, varying, flowery, but everywhere strictly regular in spite of their apparent irregularity."

"This theory of yours may have something in it. But sustain it, pray, by means of a few examples. Show me some passage where the poet says by a free verse something that the regular verse could not so well express."

“Take this stanza from the English poem *Genevieve* :\*

She wept with pity and delight,  
She blushed with love and virgin shame ;  
And, like the murmur of a dream,  
I heard her breathe my name.

“Nothing would have been easier than to give to the fourth or last verse the metre of the preceding three ; it would be enough to insert ‘softly’ and say :

I heard her softly breathe my name.

“But try it. You will find that the delicate aroma of the poetry has vanished like a shadow.”

“It is true ! — Another example.”

“La Fontaine all through is one long example. His vigorous but graceful imagination has continual recourse to Free Verses for fitly rendering the incessant variation of his ideas. Do you remember the six verses of the *Peasant of the Danube*, beginning with four sweeping Alexandrines, and ending with two lines of only four feet each ?

*Craignez, Romains, craignez que les dieux quelque jour, etc.,  
Nos esclaves à votre tour !*

“We cannot sufficiently admire the wonderful art that terminates the solemn, stately, and threatening march of the four Alexandrines with the sudden, unexpected and terrible blow struck by those two rapid lines of eight syllables !”

“It is perfectly true !” cries Cousin. “But how have you come across such reflections as these ?”

“I have told you how already — by reading aloud ! The

\* We need hardly apologize for substituting here a well known English example for the French poetry which to many readers would be rather unintelligible.

voice is a revealer, an initiator into mysteries, that possesses a power as mysterious as it is unsuspected."

"I beg your pardon — I don't quite understand you."

"You shall in a moment. A celebrated actress of the last century, Madame Talma —"

"I have seen her!" interrupts Cousin with animation.

"What a soul! Of what exquisite sensibility!"

"Well, Madame Talma relates in her *Memoirs* that, as she was playing *Andromache* one evening, she felt herself so profoundly moved that the tears flowed not only from the spectators' eyes but even from her own. The play over, one of her admirers, rushing up, takes her hand and cries: 'Oh my dear friend! It was admirable! You were *Andromache* herself! You must have imagined yourself to be really living in Epirus, *Hector's* disconsolate widow!' 'Not at all!' replies Madame laughing merrily. 'But you were certainly moved! I saw real tears!' 'Yes, I wept real tears.' 'But on what account? What made you weep if not emotion?' 'My own voice.' 'How your own voice?' 'Exactly, my own voice. What really affected me was the expression that my voice gave to poor *Andromache's* sufferings, and not by any means the thought of the sufferings themselves. The nervous shudder that thrilled my whole frame was an electric shock given to my nerves by my own accents. I was at once actress and audience. I actually magnetized myself.'"

"Decidedly a strange fact!" observes Cousin.

"But what a striking instance of the power of the human voice!"

"It is certainly a psychological phenomenon," continues Cousin, "which I have never had a glimpse of in all my studies."

"Oh!" I reply, quoting Shakespeare, "there are more

things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy. But an experience of this kind is by no means confined to Madame Talma. Rachel told me something one day that I can never forget. She was speaking of her recitations at Potsdam in the presence of the Emperor of Russia, the Emperor of Austria, the King of Prussia, and other sovereigns. 'Such a flower-bed of kings,' said she, 'actually electrified me. Never before had I hit on truer or more powerful accents. *My voice actually enchanted my own ears.*'"

"Were these Rachel's own words?"

"Her actual words. But that is not all. One of our first living artists has often told me that he never could succeed in reaching those pathetic tones of his that so profoundly affected the audience, without having previously learned his part *aloud*. It was his own voice that touched him, guided him, and always assured him when he was right. This throws some light on another strange fact, generally held inexplicable. Stupid players have been actually known to play like men of undoubted wit."

"Oh! That's impossible!"

"I have known some instances of the kind myself. Yes. I have seen men of only mediocre intelligence, wit, soul, or whatever you call it, who, once on the stage, made the best of us think, tremble, and even weep. How so, you ask. Well, their voice did it all. Their voice supplied all the lacking wit, the intelligence, the emotion. Condemn them to silence—they instantly relapse into their normal nullity. Some cunning fairy is fast asleep in their throat while they are silent; but once they begin to speak, she wakes up and with a wave of her magic wand summons to her aid powers and resources till then invisible and unknown. Indeed the voice may be



considered an invisible actor concealed within the player, an invisible speaker concealed within the reader,—and performing for both the part of a first-rate prompter. In fact, my dear philosopher, this is a problem that I must surrender altogether to your meditations, satisfying myself with drawing one little deduction—However inferior I undoubtedly am to you in many respects, it is possible that I may know La Fontaine a little better than you, simply because I generally read him aloud!”

“That point I waive the discussion of just now,” replies my interlocutor with a merry smile, “but suppose you give La Fontaine and the other great writers that you undertake to interpret, meanings, allusions, and intentions that they themselves never had the least idea of?”

“To such a supposition I should reply in the words of the illustrious Corneille himself. Somebody pointed out to him one day certain verses of his that were anything but clear, asking him to explain their meaning. He looked at them for a while, and then replied: ‘When I wrote these verses, I am certain I understood them; at present I must confess they are not a bit clearer to myself than they are to you.’ Thus even the great masters, you see, do not always comprehend their own mysteries. In the fire and glow of creation, they unconsciously give but half expression to ideas, of the full force of which they are not probably completely aware, but which are nevertheless just as real, solid, and consistent as those ideas that they have most highly elaborated. Genius, as well as beauty, as well as infancy, has its unconscious moments. A child enchanting you by the innocence of his smile is seldom aware that his smile looks innocent. But is it the less innocent for that? Well then, one of the very greatest advantages of reading master-pieces aloud is that it gradually but forcibly reveals to us



thousands of exquisite little touches that seem to be actually unknown to the very pencil that has created them. This alone would be enough to make the art of reading a powerful instrument in education. Elocution teaches us literature, just as successfully as it improves our diction."

Here we parted. But just as Cousin turned away, he uttered a few words of which, coming from such lips, I must confess I feel rather proud ;

"Thank you, my dear friend ; you have certainly taught me something I had not known before."

# PROPERTY OF DEPARTMENT OF DRAMATIC ART

## CHAPTER VIII.

### *A SOUVENIR OF RACHEL.*

THUS far I have been trying to enumerate some of the pleasures of the art of reading. I intend to conclude by giving you two illustrative instances, personal and striking, of its great utility. In one, my humble talent as reader did me an immense service. The other contributed powerfully towards procuring for me a deep and never to be forgotten heart-joy.

The first will take a whole chapter for itself.

The drama now so well known, *Adrienne Lecouvreur*, in which the chief incident is the death of an eminent actress by means of a poisoned bouquet presented by a jealous rival, was the joint composition of Scribe and myself, and had been undertaken by us expressly for Rachel at her own suggestion; I might even say at her own request. But the few months that we devoted to writing the piece had the effect of disgusting Mademoiselle with it. Changeful and fickle by nature, she was still more so by instability of character. She was continually asking everybody's opinion, and of course everybody's opinion left its impression. The few jesting remarks of some thoughtless critic completely disenchanted her with the idea that had transported her with delight five minutes before. This was at least the case with our poor *Adrienne*. Rachel's last advisers completely frightened her off. Such a daring, not to say unbecoming, departure from the legitimate

drama ! What ! *Hermione* and *Paulina* consent to speak in prose ! The daughter of *Corneille* and *Racine* become the stepdaughter of *Monsieur Scribe* ! Unheard of profanation !

On the day of the reading, therefore, you may be sure *Mademoiselle* came to our meeting fully determined to refuse the part. The hall was quite full ; the actresses — at that time they were permitted to be judges as well as the others — were quite as numerous as the actors ; and a certain quiet, court air prevailed all over the assembly, striking me the very instant I entered with an uneasy, chilling foreboding.

*Scribe* took the manuscript and began to read. I buried myself in an arm-chair and quietly watched.

I soon became aware of a double play taking place all round me and compelling me to be a most interested spectator. First, there was our own, performed by *Scribe's* tongue ; second, there was the other, progressing silently in the hearts of the judges but visible as a noonday sun to the eye of a watchful observer. Vaguely informed of the secret dispositions of their illustrious comrade, the judges felt themselves to be in a somewhat perplexing predicament. A work written for *Mademoiselle Rachel* but one which *Mademoiselle Rachel* herself was unwilling to play, was decidedly capable, if received by the committee, of becoming a subject replete with difficulties of many kinds, vexatious lawsuits not being the least of the number.

Instead of listening to *Scribe* therefore as he rolled off *Adrienne*, the judges carefully watched *Rachel's* countenance, and, as this countenance preserved a marble impassibility, the other countenances preserved a marble impassibility too. During the whole course of these five long acts, she never smiled, never approved, never applauded.

During the whole course of these five long acts, the others never smiled, never approved, never applauded. The universal stillness, in fact, was so complete that Scribe, thinking he saw one of the judges falling asleep, interrupted the reading to exclaim with great politeness :

“Don’t mind me, my dear sir ! No ceremony, I beg !”

The judge defended himself very earnestly, and that was the only incident of the reading. Stay — I am wrong — there was another incident or at least the beginning of one. In the last scene but one of the fifth act, Mademoiselle, interested in the situation in spite of herself, raised her back a little from the arm-chair in which she had been reclining as motionless as if she formed part of it, and leaned forward slightly, as if to listen with intentness to what was said ; but, noticing that I had caught the movement, she sank back quickly into the arm-chair and instantly resumed the marble countenance.

The reading over, Scribe and I went into the director’s room, where the director himself joined us in a few moments, and told us, with an air of regret probably quite sincere, that Mademoiselle Rachel “did not see herself” in *Adrienne*, and, as the work had been composed expressly for her, that the committee would prefer taking no immediate action upon it.

“In other words,” observed Scribe as we left the room, “our piece is refused. Good ! To him who knows how to wait, everything comes all right at last !”

Next morning three different theatre managers came to make us offers for the work. Scribe, who dearly loved retaliation and above all things liked his vengeance to be served up hot, wished to close the bargain at once. But I demurred.

“No, my dear friend,” said I, “our piece was written

for the *Théâtre-Français*, and it is in the *Théâtre-Français* that it must be played. The part was composed for Rachel, and Rachel will have to act it."

"But how induce Rachel to act it?"

"How? I don't know! But Rachel will play it, and nobody else! While we were working at the piece, though your share in it is considerably larger than mine, you often honored me by saying that I understood *Adrienne* better than you. I always believed in fact that there was something original and striking in the tragic actress who has learned nobility of character from the noble heroines she is so fond of representing, and who, by dint of interpreting the great Corneille, has imbibed into her soul some of the great Corneille's grandeur! Therefore, this great personage must appear nowhere else than in the theatre of the great Corneille himself!"

My earnestness half convinced Scribe. He promised to wait a little. The managers became more importunate, one of them saying, by way of an irresistible argument:

"My leading lady has never died on the stage. She would love dearly to be poisoned!"

Arguments of this kind I had no great difficulty in meeting, but, when six months had passed without improving the appearance of things, Scribe protested that he would wait no longer.

"Give me but a week," I replied, "you are going to spend a few days at Séricourt. Start on your trip to-day. At your return, if I have done nothing, I surrender gracefully."

"All right," was Scribe's answer. "This day week I shall expect you to breakfast at eleven."

"Farewell, till eleven o'clock this day week!"

Off he started, and here is what I did.



(Of course it will be readily understood that what I shall be obliged to say on my own account during the remainder of this short story, must not be considered as arrogating to myself the chief share in our joint work. I had not the chief share in it. The contrary is precisely the case. If it were possible to measure our respective shares, Scribe's would certainly prove the greater.)

A new director had been appointed for the *Théâtre-Français*. I called on him at once and spoke to him in substance pretty much as follows :

“You are aware that Mademoiselle Rachel has refused our piece. Had she the right to refuse it? That I don't know. Had she the right to put her refusal in such a form? That I do know. She certainly had no such right. That was not the way to return to such a man as Monsieur Scribe a work that he had been requested to produce. That was rather offensive treatment of a master in the highest rank and, permit me to add, of a young man who is not in the lowest. Mademoiselle Rachel, no doubt, is long since well aware of all this and must regret her precipitancy. Such talents as hers cannot but be acquainted with some of the commonest usages of politeness. Now, a way is still left to bring about a fair understanding between us, to reconcile her own interests and ours. I shall ask her formally, not to play our piece, but to listen to it fairly, not in the theatre, not before her fellow artists, but in her own parlor, in the presence of a few of her most intimate friends. She may choose them herself. She may invite as many or as few as she pleases. I shall come alone with my manuscript. If the work is then pronounced unsuitable, I take away the piece and we shall consider the matter finally settled. But if it pleases Mademoiselle and her friends, she will play it,



she will have a grand success, and she will call me her deliverer."

"The offer is accepted," wrote Rachel that very evening to her friends; "I cannot refuse Monsieur Legouvé's request, but I shall never play that——" I must omit the term she employed to express her disdain—it is enough to say that it was more expressive than polite.

The second succeeding evening was the one appointed for the reading; the judges selected by Mademoiselle were Janin<sup>71</sup>, Merle<sup>72</sup>, Rolle<sup>73</sup>, and the director of the *Théâtre-Français*.

I felt, no doubt, a little flustered as I entered the room, but I was quite master of myself. I knew I was in the right, and had carefully trained myself for the encounter. I had reflected over the question with myself somewhat in this way: Scribe was certainly an excellent reader, and had really read our piece admirably before the committee, all but in one part—that of *Adrienne*. In my opinion he had not individualized this rôle sufficiently for Rachel; he had read it certainly with much spirit, grace, warmth, but, as I thought, not without some of the mannerism of a young leading actress; the grandeur I considered rather tame; the heroine was rather obscured under the woman. Now it was with this precise point that I had determined to attack Mademoiselle, to capture her, to tame her, to break her in, as it were, by presenting her a new but still a grand and noble personage. Her success would be no easy matter; her attempt would be beset with great danger and difficulty. To diminish this danger, and to smooth down this difficulty as much as possible, was evidently our business. It was our business to sketch in faint but tangible outline how she was to pass gradually from one line of character to another, and to convince Rachel herself that

what the public would consider a complete metamorphosis was in reality to her nothing more difficult than a mere change of costume. This was the point that Scribe had not sufficiently insisted on; this was the fine shading that he had not sufficiently brought out; and this was precisely what I had been carefully preparing myself during the last two days to render perfectly visible and palpable to my audience in general, but to Mademoiselle herself in particular.

I arrive. A charming reception, full of that wheedling, cajoling, coaxing grace that became her so well. Her own fair hands prepare my glass of sugared water; her own fair hands bring me a chair; her own fair hands dispose the curtains so that I may have the benefit of the most favorable light. I could not help smiling to myself, remembering, as I did too well, the famous phrase "I will never play that ——" and knowing, as I did too well, the whole why and wherefore of all this pretty strategy. It was to sugar-coat the pill. How could so sweet and courteous a listener be ever suspected of secret ill-will and malice pre-pense? It was all what is called in French theatrical slang *préparation*, and in English humbug.

I begin. During the whole first act Mademoiselle applauded, approved, smiled—did, in short, exactly the contrary to what she had done at the committee reading. Why so? Oh! why so! It was easy to tell. Her part was well prepared. As an excuse for her rejection she wanted to be able to say that *Adrienne's* character did not suit her, and as *Adrienne* does not appear before the second act, praising the first act could evidently do no harm, don't you see? On the contrary, her very praises would give an air of impartiality to her subsequent strictures and spread an air of sincerity over the regrets of her subsequent refusal.

More "*préparation*," more humbug. But unfortunately here, as often elsewhere, humbug overshot its mark. The acting was so exceedingly good that it did not pass for acting at all. Her friends, witnessing what they considered her genuine satisfaction, began to experience something like satisfaction themselves and, seeing her applaud warmly, followed suit in applauding warmly too. The reader, emboldened by all these unequivocal signs of approbation, plucked up new courage, and got to the first act in right good style, holding his audience well in hand. In fact, to change the metaphor, he felt himself already sailing serenely under a press of canvas, impelled by that electric current of success which is so well known to dramatic authors and which he is sure will manifest itself so thrillingly at the decisive moment of victory.

In the second act *Adrienne* makes her appearance, holding in her hand the part of *Bajazet* which she is studying. The *Prince de Bouillon* approaches her and observes gaily: "You still appear to be looking for something; what is it may I ask?" "I am looking for the truth!" she replies. "Bravo! bravo!" exclaimed Janin. "Oh!" said I to myself, "that must be a friend, for certainly the word does not merit a bravo." Mademoiselle too was a little startled, and gave Janin a look that seemed to say: "What! A traitor here?" Fortunately the "traitor's" opinion soon became everybody else's opinion. Rachel, surprised and very much embarrassed at not finding herself filled with her former disdain, made but a feeble resistance against the general impression, and at the end of the second act even chimed in with the general sentiment by saying, "Well, I always thought there was something in that second act."

This was her last semblance of defence. From the very

beginning of the third act she ridded herself of her former prejudices as completely as politicians do of unpopular opinions. She applauded, she laughed, she shed tears, every now and then muttering "What a silly simpleton I have been!" At the end of the fifth act, she actually threw herself on my neck, exclaiming with streaming eyes:

"How have you kept yourself off the stage?"

The reader had saved the author.

I was charmed and flattered beyond measure, you may be sure; the more especially as, a few months before this, having heard Guizot<sup>14</sup> deliver a rousing speech on some occasion or other, she had cried out:

"How I should have liked to play tragedy with such a man!"

Next morning, at eleven o'clock precisely, I rang Scribe's bell.

"Well," he cried, with a bantering air and evidently expecting to have a good laugh, "what luck? How did you get on?"

My only answer was to pull out one of the regular notices sent to the actors and read it:

"*Théâtre-Français*, this day at noon, first rehearsal of ADRIENNE LECOUVREUR."

"What!!" he exclaimed; he was actually too stupefied to utter another word.

I told him the whole story, and a month afterwards the curtain rose for the first and extremely successful representation of our joint production.

That month revealed to me also a curious instance of the weird and strangely mysterious emotions that are often attendant on dramatic interpretation.

One evening, a few days before the first representation

of *Adrienne*, the regular business of the theatre was interrupted for a regular stage rehearsal. Scribe, detained at the Grand Opera by preparations for *Le Prophète*, could not be present. Incessant corrections and repetitions delayed us all so long that it was fully eleven o'clock before we got through the first four acts. In fact it was so late that we concluded it was time to stop altogether. Everybody had gone away except Rachel, Regnier, Maillart<sup>75</sup> and myself. All at once Rachel exclaims :

“Here we are all alone, monarchs of all we survey. Suppose we try the fifth act? I have not rehearsed it yet. But I have been studying it carefully for the last three days and I should like to know how I am succeeding.”

We go out on the vast stage. No gas, no footlights, no light at all in fact but the little argand lamp standing beside the vacant prompter's hole. No spectators even, except a fireman fast asleep on a chair between the “wings,” and myself seated among the music-stands of the orchestra.

From the very beginning something in Rachel's accents thrilled me to the heart. Never before had I seen her so truly, simply and affectingly tragic. The flickering little smoky lamp threw lividities on her face that were absolutely terrifying, whilst the emptiness of the great auditorium imparted to her voice a strange sonority that startled as well as enthralled. The effect was death-like !

The act over, on our return to the foyer, I happened to look into a mirror, and could not help noticing how pale my face was. Regnier and Maillart too were like sheets. As for Rachel, she sat for some time in a corner, silent, fluttering nervously, and wiping the tears that still streamed down her cheeks. I went up to her, pointing, by way of



compliment, at her companions' faces, and saying as I took her hand :

"Dear friend, you have played that fifth act as you will never play it again in all your life."

"That is my own conviction," she replied ; "but do you know why?"

"I think I do. None being here to applaud, you never thought of acting for effect ; so you became in your own imagination poor *Adrienne* expiring at midnight in the arms of her two friends."

After thinking over this observation for a few moments, she replied :

"No. That's not it. An exceedingly strange phenomenon took place within me. It is not over *Adrienne* that I have been weeping—but over myself! Something suddenly told me that, like *Adrienne*, I should die young. I felt as if I was lying in my own room, at my last moments, present at my own death!—And when I repeated the lines: 'Farewell, dramatic triumphs! Farewell, entrancing art that I have loved so much'—you saw me shed real tears. With mournful despair I was rapidly realizing how soon time would sweep away every recollection of my little talents, and how the world would soon be left without the faintest trace of poor Rachel!"

Alas! poor Rachel's presentiments were only too well founded! A very few years later she lay on her death-bed, like her sister Rebecca, and of the same hopeless, fell disease too, at a little village in the south of France. In the hospitable home of a warm-hearted relative of Sardou's<sup>76</sup>, she had received a singularly warm and sympathetic hospitality. In this romanesque villa of his he had, however, indulged his somewhat mystical love for the fanciful by accumulating in strange and curious contrast many monuments of the dif-



ferent religions of the far East. Every piece of furniture in every room was symbolic of something. Arriving hurriedly from her long journey, and almost completely exhausted, Rachel, without looking around, had hardly strength enough left to throw herself on a bed. Waking up suddenly in the middle of the night, she utters a wild shriek of terror! Her eyeballs stare in a stony agony! What does she see? The bed on which she lay was shaped like a tomb, and right before her eyes and almost within arm's reach she sees the misshapen figure of a woman stooping as if to seize her. It was only a wooden image holding the curtain.

"It's Death!" she screamed at last, flinging herself madly out of the bed. "Help! Help! Protect me against Death!"

Her last days were passed in those alternate fits of terrible illusion and gloomy consciousness that are peculiar to organic maladies. She often said:

"About six hours of the day I grasp at something like hope; the other hours I see nothing but black despair."

Her sufferings, strange to say, sometimes revealed themselves in plastic attitudes full of a soft and graceful elegance—attitudes of which, no doubt, she was fully conscious, for never, even when writhing under the severest bodily agony, did she cease for a moment to see herself. In this she resembled all the great dramatic actors. They are to themselves an everlasting, never wearying, always interesting spectacle. However great their despair, however rending their suffering, they can always eye it calmly like a spectator and see that it becomes them. Rachel knew that she exhibited the elegant pose of a young heroine dying of a deadly disease; by way of variety, she sometimes outlined a graceful statue of grief.

Chance having brought me at the time to Toulon, I immediately hastened to Sardou's romantic villa overhanging the Mediterranean, but she was too weak for me to be permitted to see her. Next morning, however, she sent me a note expressing her warmest thanks for my visit. It concluded with the following most amiable and flattering but, alas! expiring words:

"No one can create real *women* better than you. Promise to write me a play *to celebrate my return to the stage—*"

In three days she was dead.

I have perhaps allowed myself to be carried away too far by this retrospect, but in a study on Diction nothing could be more natural than a digression on the memory of one of the most illustrious exponents of the art. Besides it conducts us at once to the last illustrious name on our list and to one of my most treasured recollections as a reader.

## CHAPTER IX.

PONSARD.

PONSARD<sup>17</sup> lay on his death-bed. The previous summer, that of 1866, he had spent in his native province of Isère, expecting amid its bracing Alpine breezes to obtain some relief from the fatal disease that was fast sapping his life away. But these holidays he had not devoted to idleness. He had written a Monologue on Galileo, and sent it to Paris, with the request that it should be read at the August meeting of his brother Academicians. The work arrived at the Institute just as we were engaged in one of our private sessions; my *confrères* were impatient to know what it was like, and I was unanimously requested to read it.

I had never seen a line of it before, and everybody knows what a difficult matter it is to read even a printed piece of poetry at first sight. A triple operation of a very complicated nature has to be performed at the same moment; the eyes, the understanding, and the voice have to be improvisers. The eyes must not only be able to catch the line they are looking at but actually the words one or two lines ahead; the understanding has to divine from the very beginning the total scope of the piece, its movement, its general character; while the voice must reproduce instantly and without hesitation the sounds exactly corresponding with the words as fast as these are conveyed by the eyes and the understanding.

The task, as you see, is no easy one. It requires a rapidity of conception, an elasticity of voice, and an intuitive perception of intimate relation, such as a long and careful course of previous preparation can alone impart. Before you can venture on the first of Beethoven's<sup>78</sup> sonatas at which the book may open, you must have practised your octaves pretty constantly. Still, strange as it may appear, it has happened occasionally that the reader, spurred into unwonted activity by the very difficulty of the task, inspired, as it were, by the sudden glimpses of beauties starting up successively before him, and therefore really as delightfully surprised as his hearers themselves, actually surpasses himself in his attempt at extempore interpretation; he hits on accents, audacities, and happy successes which the best prepared reader would have never attempted to aspire after.

But I hear you already pleasantly whispering to each other; you fancy I am telling my own story, and that all this dissertation is nothing but introductory to another of my grand successes as a reader. Undeceive yourselves at once, my good friends; I am sorry to say it; I read abominably. My *confrères* began to compliment me as usual, but I cut them short at once.

"No eulogiums!" cried I. "I don't deserve them. But I know my mistake; when the time comes for the public reading, I shall read well."

What was the mistake? Was it altogether my own? Or was the author partly in fault? I alone was the criminal.

The Monologue contains a hundred and twenty lines. It commences with some majesty:

*Non, les temps ne sont plus, où reine solitaire, etc.*

(No, those days are gone forever! Queen Earth no longer sits in

solitary grandeur on her immovable throne. No longer does Apollo's blazing chariot, climbing heaven's azure vault, describe the magnificent arch that spans the universe from east to west! etc.)

Like a simple novice, I had launched out in full force on the very first verses; I had given way with a vengeance; I had soared upwards like a balloon when the ropes are cut; like a frisky colt I had run away with myself, never once imagining when or how I was to pull up. At the fortieth line I began to puff a little; at the eightieth I was decidedly out of breath; and when I had come to the magnificent peroration, which so imperatively demanded the freest and fullest display of all my powers, alas! I had no powers left! Instead of the genuine and intense emotion which I should have felt, but of which I did not feel the slightest particle, I was obliged to pawn off on my hearers a factitious heat, a wind-bag emotion, a sham enthusiasm. I could not get up my steam. Coal and water had been already exhausted.

I took the piece with me into the country, and, plunging as usual into the depths of the great forest, I surrendered myself totally to its serious study.

The Monologue is simply a journey through infinite space. It has four flights. The first is confined to the Earth, whom Galileo dethrones, compelling her to take her proper place in the universe. The second flight comprehends the solar system and all those stars visible to the naked eye. The third takes us off to the boundless dominions of the nebulæ. The fourth describes Galileo surveying with dazzled eyes the illimitable but teeming abysses; and the whole concludes with his sublime hymn of adoration to the great CREATOR.

The reader's course would seem to be plain enough. He should simply imitate the poet, and reserve his most vigor



ous efforts for the conclusion. But how arrive at this conclusion without fatiguing his hearers too much? Or without, what is still worse, fatiguing himself too much? A Monologue of a hundred and twenty lyrical verses is no joke either for hearer or reader! What good is emotion without a voice to convey it? No matter what your stock of real emotion may be, the instant your voice betrays weariness or languor adieu to your proper effect on the audience!

Cicero says: *Nil citius arescit quam lacryma*—nothing dries up quicker than a tear. But I beg to differ with him—something else dries up just as fast—faster—admiration! No monotony is so fatiguing, so straining, as the monotony of the sublime.

First of all then, it was perfectly clear that I should try to find out certain bits of contrast, of repose, of opposition, of light and shade; at every available moment I should dismount from my chariot of Elias. In fact, I should be in no hurry at all to get into it.

Let us examine the piece in detail.

The first twenty verses, though of a decidedly poetical cast, are really little more than the expression of a scientific truth.

*Non, les temps ne sont plus, etc.*

These, therefore, I should deliver with decision, with conviction, with authority, as the expression of unquestioned scientific facts beyond all cavil or dispute, but without any undue expenditure of lyrical effusion.

Next comes the superb apostrophe to the Sun and to all those portions of starry space that can be contemplated by the unaided human eye.

*Soleil! Globe de feu! Gigantesque fournaise, etc.*

(Sun! Fiery globe! Fountain of light and heat, etc.)



Here it was clear enough that I should not be afraid to come out strong, as the saying is, to give my voice its full swing, to lift it up, higher and still higher, until it should reach the nebulas !

Then—a change—absolute and complete. The ineffably mysterious depths of the INFINITE are now to be represented. And to represent them fitly I soon found out that the poet had limited himself to terms of mysterious import, to words of oracular and shadowy meaning, to tints of clear-obscure that remind us of Corot's<sup>79</sup> vaporous, misty, semi-diaphanous canvases.

*Il est, je les ai vus, des nuages laiteux,  
Des gouttes, etc.*

(Yes, they exist, I have seen them, these milky mist-streaks, these light-dots, of ray so faint that a glow-worm twinkling in grassy tuft sheds light enough to eclipse them all, etc.)

Here, of course, I was to endeavor to depict by modulation of voice what the poet had endeavored to depict by choice of words, to find shades in harmony with these tints, to compose music for these verses ! This pause in the semi-obscurity, these notes, soft, sweet, soothing as a spirit chorus, had the double advantage of reposing me a little, and preparing the way with greater effect for the grand lyrical enthusiasm of the conclusion.

But I had to look out for something else in the piece. I should depict the MAN.

Who is supposed to speak these verses ? Ponsard ? Not at all. Galileo. These verses are no ode on the great discoveries of a great discoverer. They are the words of the great discoverer himself. He speaks in verse certainly, but he tells us a true story, *his own work* ! Him, therefore, I should do everything to bring forward. I looked carefully

for a verse which would be, as it were, a portrait of Galileo; instead of one, I found no less than three.

It is to the *Beautiful* that the poets direct all their efforts, all their culture, all their art. But for the scientists it is the *True* that possesses an exclusive fascination. Accordingly, when not far from the beginning I came on

*Jusqu' au regne du Vrai la science nous hausse,*  
(Science lifts us into the kingdom of the *True*,)

and when a few lines farther on I met

*Science! Amour du Vrai!*  
(Science! Love of the *True*!)

I should evidently lay such decided stress on the word *True*, I should detach it from the others, so vividly and distinctly, I should pronounce it with an accent so strong and expressive that the hearers could not help noticing that it stood out in the greatest possible relief. They should be made to understand that this word was the mainspring, the very essence of Galileo's genius.

But that is not all. In the very midst of a passage actually sparkling with enthusiasm what should I light upon but the *pur si muove*! Apocryphal or not, this famous phrase should be made to tell with all its force.

*O terre, notre mère, à peine refroidie,*  
*Autour de toi, se meut, etc.*

(O Earth, Mother Earth, scarcely art thou cooled, when around thee moves, etc.)

Here it is clear I was to suddenly drop the lyrical tone so as to be able to concentrate on the words *Autour de toi, se meut* (around thee moves) all the energy of affirmation I was capable of.

It would be only after a judicious use of all these diverse oppositions of tones and effects that I could arrive at the

conclusion with every power of mine still fresh and vigorous. Then I could surrender myself wholly to my enthusiasm, sweep along at full sail, call up all my reserves, and utter with triumphant exultation this magnificent cry:

*Allez, persécuteurs ! lancez vos anathèmes !  
Je suis religieux beaucoup plus que vous mêmes.  
Dieu, que vous invoquez, etc.*

(Go on, ye persecutors! Keep launching your anathemas against a man more truly religious than yourselves! Better than you do I serve the great God whom you pretend to invoke. In your eyes this little lump of mud is the whole universe. Mine can find the illuminating splendor of the Deity come to an end *nowhere*! You contract the Divine Majesty. I expand it! And, like the kings formerly chained to the conqueror's chariot, whole universes do I lay at the feet of our Mighty CREATOR!)

This study cost me at least three days' hard work. What sustained me all the time was not — need I say it? — the silly expectation of making my reading a success. No! It was wholly and solely the ardent desire with which I burned to contribute something, however small, towards the last triumph of my poor friend now approaching his last hour, something which might give him a little pleasure before he left us forever.

The success of the public reading of the piece was great — to deny it would be affectation. I wrote all about it to Ponsard. I told him the story of my study and how I had enjoyed three days of the closest intimacy with him through his fine work. I detailed all I had looked for and all I had discovered. I even tried to reveal to the poet himself something new and unexpected in his poetry.

His reply repaid me for everything. Never in my life have I received a letter so full of joy, emotion and surprise. "You have given my aches," he said, "at least one day's respite."

Have I been wrong in telling you that neither the gratifications of self-love nor even the charms of successful intellectual effort are by any means the only results of our noble art? Does it not also play an important part in our dearest and most intimate sensibilities?

And this is exactly the reason why I should especially like to have for its most ardent votaries a particular class, but a most important class, of human beings, of whom I am ashamed to say I have as yet made no especial mention — the women. Our art suits the women and becomes the women even more particularly than the men. They possess from nature a flexibility of organs and a facility of imitation that wonderfully dispose them to every mode of interpretation and most particularly to the art of reading. I can even add that this talent — to the men an instrument of labor, a means of professional success — may be cultivated by the women in the midst of their pleasantest household avocations, of their dearest family duties. They are daughters, sisters, mothers, wives. Many a one of them has seen, and surely will see without ever stirring out of her own door, an old tottering father, a poor mourning mother, a weak, sickly child. The father can't read, his eyes are too weak. The mother can't read, her heart shudders at the task. The ailing child would like dearly to read, but he is unable. What a sweet pleasure then lies in store for the young girl who, at the slight expense of a few well-read pages, can cheer up the troubled, console the bereaved, and amuse the suffering or the restless!

In the name then of the dearest, the warmest, the noblest sentiments of the human heart, I now call upon the women of France, and earnestly exclaim:

*Learn to read as you should read! Endeavor to acquire a talent that can be so easily turned into a virtue!*

## CHAPTER X.

### *THE LAST WORD.*

THIS little treatise I have dedicated to the Students of the Higher Normal School<sup>80</sup>. I must take the liberty of recommending it also to every member of the Primary Schools, pupils, teachers, and all.

Especially intended for the perusal of a select few, the *élite* of the students of the University<sup>81</sup> of France, can our modest pamphlet prove of any advantage to the less pretentious requirements of primary education?

This question the reader must decide for himself. The few words I am going to add may help him in forming a just decision.

A day or two ago, at the request of the Inspector-General of Girls' Schools, I visited, in a quarter of Paris which can be no longer called a poor quarter, a model primary school and a model normal school. I was requested to listen first to the reading of the children, and then to that of the young ladies who were preparing to qualify themselves for teaching.

With regard to the children, two faults struck me in particular. Their voices were very weak; of punctuation they exhibited a woeful and total ignorance. They read as if their vocal chords had no more variety than a tin whistle; they kept on reading as if there was not a single period or comma from one end of the book to the other.

What is the cause of the first defect? A congenital



weakness of the organ? Not at all. When, instead of reading, I asked them to speak, their voices sounded clear, melodious, rich in intonation. Is it timidity? Well—yes—partly timidity—but a timidity that has its very essence and foundation in ignorance, in want of experience, in vicious methods. Of the proper management of their voices they know actually nothing.

Among the young ladies, the future teachers of our country, I certainly discovered and appreciated some original qualities of correct and even of elegant diction, but of the mechanical part, the technical part, of the art of reading they seemed to me to have very little general conception. Their teacher is certainly an able man, but it seems he is not allowed half time enough to do justice either to his pupils or himself.

Is it a matter of slight importance to allow the pupils and teachers of our primary schools to continue in this ignorance?

Let the reader again judge for himself.

The lady at the head of the Girls' Normal School assured me that, for every twenty sent out of her hands every year to take charge of primary schools, two and sometimes even three were regularly obliged to stop work, suffering so much from affections of the throat that they were often obliged to give up the business of teaching forever.

To no one, therefore, more than the teacher himself, and particularly the female teacher, is the art of reading indispensable. By learning to read, they learn at the same time to take breath, to punctuate properly, and to be able to stick to their work without over-fatiguing themselves. Exercising the voice properly is the most healthy of all gymnastic exercises! To strengthen the voice is to impart strength to the whole organization. Strengthen



your voice, and you develop not only your vocal capacities but also the whole force and powers of the lungs and larynx.

Here is a proof.

In 1846 M. Fortoul<sup>82</sup> was appointed to an important position in the Faculty of Aix University. He hesitated about accepting; his weak throat made him look with some dread on the duties of a teacher. "Accept, by all means," said his physician; "the habitual exercise of your vocal organs in a public hall will strengthen them; only you must first learn how to speak." He did accept; he did learn how to speak; he spoke; he succeeded; and at the end of the year he found he had made four thousand francs by simply undertaking to cure himself of his sore throat.

What is true for the mechanical part of reading is equally true for the intellectual part. Oh, what a new and powerful lever of action the teacher would possess over the plainer portion of our people, particularly in the rural districts, if he could only initiate them, by means of pleasant and instructive readings, little by little, into a knowledge, however imperfect, of some of the grander pieces of our literature! Is not a lesson on French genius a lesson also on French history? Is it not our duty to redouble, to strengthen, and to rivet fast every tie that can attach our people to the intellectual glories of our country? Have not the humble classes too an imagination, an intellect, a heart?

Even confining ourselves altogether to elementary public instruction, what a powerful aid reading affords towards the development and expansion of the pupil's intelligence! The great and indispensable instrument in the workshop of education is memory. How he can make the best possi-

ble use of this important instrument, the child will be best taught by being made to read aloud frequently but always intelligently. Instead of forcing words into his brain with a pile-driver as it were, and trying to keep them there by everlasting, monotonous, and mechanical repetitions, suppose we try to make him imbibe them quietly and pleasantly by at once calling into play both his reason and his sentiment ! Suppose we could succeed in making his intelligence understand, while his taste at the same time relished, the beauties of some literary masterpiece. Would he not both learn quicker and retain longer ? Nothing is more conducive in enabling us to learn by heart than comprehension united with admiration.

In the name then of a sound condition of mind and body, and in the confident hope of obtaining both for France, I call on our people to imitate the people of the United States of North America by making the art of reading aloud the very corner-stone of public education. I demand, feebly I am afraid, but perseveringly I am determined, for our children's instruction :

1. A Complete Course of Reading for our Normal Schools.
2. A set of Prizes for Reading in our Primary Schools.

Real progress in education is possible only when it commences with childhood and with the people.

IN A DEMOCRATIC STATE, SUCH AS OURS, WHERE EVERYTHING IS DONE AT THE COMMON EXPENSE, EVERYTHING SHOULD BE DONE FOR THE COMMON ADVANTAGE.

## A SUPPLEMENTARY CHAPTER.

(From a smaller work of our Author's that has just appeared in Paris we make the following extracts. Their practical nature recommends them to our attention.)

TAKE any educational establishment you please in all France, and what will you find it has done for reading aloud? Is there a course of reading, a class for reading, a prize for reading in any of the primary schools? No. In any of the primary normal schools? No. In any of the industrial or commercial schools? No. In any of the colleges? No. Neither masters nor pupils ever learn to read.

Leave the schools and go into society; take the liberal professions one by one; who learns to read? The lawyers? No. The magistrates? No. The notaries, the public officers, the members of the learned societies? Not a single one of them. We have masters for everything else; for our organs, our limbs, our exercises, our amusements. We are taught how to dance, to swim, to box, to jump, to run, to fence, to shoot; but the very organ which we are using every moment and in every circumstance of life, the very instrument that of all instruments is most effectual in promoting cordial intercourse with our fellow-beings, this indispensable utensil, the most distinctive attribute of the human race, has no especial teacher among us, receives nowhere careful especial instruction!

Whence comes this singular anomaly? From three mis-

takes. The study of reading aloud has been neglected or rejected in our system of public education: 1. Because people think there is no use in it. 2. Because people think there is neither time nor room for it. 3. Because, like poetry and music, people think it can't be taught unless you have a great natural talent for it. Now let us examine these three objections, as far at least as they concern our primary schools.

## UTILITY.

Some people of what is erroneously called a practical mind solemnly assure us:

“Everything connected with primary instruction must be of a serious and above all of a useful character. The art of reading may no doubt form a desirable *extra* for the richer classes; it may form elegant society-talkers and help considerably in improving amateur theatricals; but on what grounds can you possibly introduce reading as an art into the severe and sober programme of our primary schools? This programme includes nothing but the solidities, grammar, geography, arithmetic, history. In such earnest and austere company what business has this *art*, amusing, graceful, even elegant if you will, but just as frivolous and distracting as dancing? Of what possible advantage would the art of reading be to the sons and daughters of our laborers, our artisans, and our working-classes in general? Of what benefit would it be even to their teachers?”

Of what advantage? Of what benefit? It would enable both the pupils and the teachers how to do their duty better.

The art of Reading is, certainly, an ornamental art, an enjoyable art, but it is also an eminently useful art. It

may, certainly, maintain a very high position in what is called an elegant and polished education, but it should maintain in popular education, if not the same rank, at least the same claim on our attention as geography or grammar. Reading well should not be the privilege of a few; it is a necessity for all. To prove the proposition, if proof is necessary, let us take a few simple facts.

The duties of a primary teacher are chiefly confined to giving explanations, reading detached passages, correcting exercises by word of mouth. Now, how does he explain, read, or correct? By his voice. Is it not evidently to the pupils' advantage that the voice should be clear and strong? Do not oral explanations or extracts from authors always make a stronger impression on the children when the pronunciation is precise and when the delivery corresponds with the words? Of course they do, for the words are not everything in a sentence; the music of the words and the accent of the words have their value too; they are to speech what the feathers are to the arrow; they carry it farther and direct it straighter to the mark.

This is not all. School-time begins at eight and ends at four; deduct recess, and we have seven hours a day for hard solid work. During these seven hours a day what is the teacher doing? Speaking. These seven hours a day continue for ten months in the twelve; and this often lasts for ten years, twenty years, thirty years! What a wearing occupation! What an exhausting profession! For the teacher, therefore, an interest also of the first order exists, the interest of his health, the interest of his life probably, in knowing how to make proper use of the only and the very frail service-instrument he is provided with, in being enabled to protect it, to spare it, to render it capable of enduring such long and laborious employment.



One of the very first fruits to be derived from the study of the art of Reading is to learn how to read and speak without fatigue.

As for the pupils, a single word will be enough.

What is their principal work? Learning their lessons and reciting them. What should be their chief aim? To learn these lessons as soon as possible, to recite them as correctly as possible, and to retain them as long as possible.

Now, that the art of Reading conducts precisely to these three results, is what I expect to show by my answer to the second objection.

#### TOO MUCH TO DO.

One of the strongest objections against our present system of public instruction, undoubtedly, is that it undertakes too much. The children are absolutely crushed under the mass of detail. The class-rooms are too small for the classes; the hours are too short for the lessons. Teachers and taught want time alike. How then can we think of introducing a new branch? Where is the room for it? What shall we drop from the programme so as to make way for it?

The answer is easy.

I would introduce the Art of Reading as a useful art only on condition that it shall crowd nothing else, that it shall disturb nothing else, that it shall replace nothing else; but that it shall have something to do with everything so as to be able to serve as an assistant to everything. It will be no overburden to the memory, it will be only an aid; it will be no new demand on the intelligence, it will be rather a relief and an alleviation of mental toil. It will play the same part in instruction that the *adjuvants* do in nutrition; it will stimulate and facilitate assimilation; it will not be a



new article of food, it will be the salt, the spice, and the appetizing element of the other dishes.

What I mean, two examples will make perfectly clear.

When he has a lesson to learn, what is done by the average pupil? Does he not begin to mumble, in a low or loud voice as the case may be, repeating each word perhaps twenty times, mechanically, by machinery, tagging line to line, until at last he has got the whole page into his brain the Lord knows how, to remain there the Lord knows how long. Now bring before me the very best pupil in the primary schools, and I will cheerfully lay a wager with him, which I am honest enough, however, to tell him I have often won. His memory is fresh, keen, sensitive, vigorous; mine, on the contrary, is old, wearing out, dull. No matter for that! Let him select any page he likes, and I am willing to bet that I shall know it by heart twice as soon as he does! Why shall I be thus able to beat him at his own game? Because I shall know how to strengthen my memory by availing myself of my knowledge of the art of reading. That is, I shall learn the page by reading it correctly, methodically, intelligently, by observing the laws of punctuation, by strictly following the movement of the thought. Read in this manner, every word in the sentence will print itself more strongly in my memory because it will engrave itself more clearly on my intelligence. Learning to read is, therefore, learning how to learn; consequently it is not time lost; it is time gained.

Now let us take recitations in class. What inspector does not complain of the well-known sing-song, nasal, monotonous, and always false music, with which the average pupil recites an answer even no more than four or five lines long? Does it not hurt our ears as well as shock our com-

mon sense? Does it not impart a momentary air of imbecility to a countenance otherwise bright and intelligent? The instant he stands up to give an answer, the boy assumes a stupid look; he does not seem to know what he is saying; in fact he understands worse because he recites badly, and he would evidently understand better if he recited well. But if he understood better, would not he remember longer? This is self-evident. Faithfulness of recollection depends quite as much on the intelligence as on the memory; the memory receives the impression and retains it, but the intelligence engraves it. Learning to read, therefore, is learning to retain, because it is learning to understand. Once more, then, learning to read is time gained, and not time lost.

The question is now evidently quite simplified, and the difficulty resolved.

No new programme, no new teachers are required for the new branch. The regular teachers can teach it while attending to their ordinary duties.

The only important point to be taken into consideration is that the teachers themselves should understand it, and that Reading should be insisted upon as an obligatory study in the primary normal schools. Once the teachers have fully imbibed, steeped themselves in, the principles of our art, give yourself no further trouble; their ears will do the rest. Their ears would be so shocked, so hurt, so offended by the lingual defects of their pupils that they would correct them thoroughly, even if instigated by no loftier motive than mere self-love. Nothing is so successful in kindling our enthusiasm against evils as finding these evils to be personally offensive.

Now to resume.

Reading should bear on *everything*. Making the pupils

read, however well, a detached passage or two is of very little use. They should never be allowed to recite a page, give an explanation,\* make an answer, read an exercise even, without being compelled, imperatively, inexorably compelled to observe the fundamental rules of the art of reading.

I care very little for set recitations. I could never see much good in those prepared displays, made on Distribution Days, when the children, mounted on a platform and dressed in all their finery, recite before an audience of their parents and friends, with gestures prepared beforehand, accents prepared beforehand, and countenances prepared beforehand, some fable, or story, or dialogue suitable to the occasion. Perhaps if everything had been only *well* prepared beforehand, I might not consider such exercises as quite useless, but, generally speaking, the poor children remind me of the Dutch Dolls that, when you squeeze them hard, squeak out *mamma* and *papa*; you think you hear so many phonographs; they are not human beings at all, they are so many automatons warranted to go as long as they are wound up. It is painful to see childhood thus lose its charm,—I might say its dignity. The worst thing we can make out of a child is a poll-parrot.

Nor should we go to the other extreme. I am just as opposed to turning him into a play-actor.

Our present mode of teaching Drawing explains pretty well what I mean.

The day is fortunately gone forever when heads of *Romulus* or *Alexander the Great*, beautifully indian-inked, beautifully stumped, or beautifully cross-hatched with lines all perfectly even and parallel, were hung on the walls in beautiful frames, and fondly gazed upon by

innocent parents as veritable specimens of their children's artistic ability! Ability! So far from being able to draw *a head of Romulus*, the poor creatures could not make a decent offer at drawing an ink-bottle! Such puerile nonsense is now dropped forever. Drawing to-day is taught more seriously and more sensibly.

So it should be with Reading.

Simple stories, plain passages, acts and thoughts within easy range of the children's comprehension — such should be the rough materials of their exercise. They must be taught to walk, before they undertake to dance. Let them read nothing which they do not fully feel or understand. Prose rather than poetry. In order to read verses well, rather brilliant and unusual qualities are required. Beginning with poetry would be like putting rhetoric before grammar. Let us begin at the beginning by teaching them correctness, clearness, naturalness, and above all punctuation. The art of punctuating as we read, as we have already observed, is half the art of Reading; for properly punctuating not only renders us clear but gives us rest and breathing-time. Commas and semicolons judiciously interspersed through a long sentence are like convenient landings on a steep stairway: they lighten the journey when we go up, and diminish the danger when we come down.

The third and last objection to the introduction of the Art of Reading into our primary schools, is the alleged impossibility of teaching it. Like music or painting; people say, it must be born in us; otherwise teaching the Art of Reading would be so much time lost.

But for such an objection, the reader who has done me the favor of reading this little work will readily find a suitable answer. By this time I feel pretty certain that he

is quite convinced that the Art of Reading well is an art within the compass of any one who can read at all.

A few concluding words.

I have shown, I think, that pupils as pupils and masters as masters will find a powerful auxiliary in the Art of Reading. But pupils will not be always pupils; masters are nearly always something else besides masters; our art will be beneficial, however they may be circumstanced, out of school as well as at school, not only during their school-time but forever after.

Sixty years ago, a faculty for public speaking was a rarity in France; oratory, a signal exception. To-day the voice has become the great agent, the most powerful medium, in all our social relations.

To-day we must all learn to read and to speak, because we are all continually liable to be called on to speak or to read. The incessant commotion of modern life is multiplying public assemblies so rapidly that there is no end to our discourses, harangues, or readings. Meetings, receptions, committees, assemblies electoral, industrial, commercial, reunions literary, learned, scientific, etc., are so many new forms of public life so continually and universally springing up that almost at any moment the humblest citizen may be compelled to play the part of reader or speaker. When the pupils leave school will they not have their trades-meetings to attend to as artisans, their agricultural meetings to attend to as farmers, their beneficial society meetings to attend to as workmen, their ward meetings to attend to as voters? Here will they not often be obliged to read aloud some report, some proposal, some return, some description of the situation of affairs? If they read badly, will they not expose themselves to be badly heard, badly understood, and, still more likely, to



be the objects of merciless ridicule? If they read well, will not their discourses be more clear, more convincing, and will not their reputation for intelligence and ability gain in proportion?

The answers to these questions need not be given. It is too evident to any thinking man that the ideas we acquire regarding good reading at school we shall not lose in our after life; that when full-grown men, we can turn to good account what we have learned as boys; and that even a little ability as readers will enable us not only to perform our ordinary duties, but also those of a good citizen, in a manner more satisfactory towards ourselves and decidedly more advantageous towards others.





# PROPERTY OF DEPARTMENT OF DRAMATIC ART

## NOTES.

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### A SHORT SKETCH OF ERNEST LEGOUVÉ, MEMBER OF THE FRENCH ACADEMY.

GABRIEL J. B. ERNEST W. LEGOUVÉ, son of J. B. Legouvé, author of *Le Mérite des femmes*, *La Mort d'Henri Quatre*, etc., was born at Paris, Feb. 15, 1807, in the same house, No. 14 *Rue St. Marc*, where he still lives with his grandchildren. His first literary attempt, a poem on *The Discovery of Printing*, obtained the prize for excellence offered by the French Academy in 1827, but another poem *Old Men* (1834) and two novels, *Max* (1833) and *Edith of Falsen*, though possessing much merit, failed to attract general attention.

In 1857, he delivered in the College of France a highly successful course of lectures on the *Moral History of Women*. Another course of lectures on *Parents and Children in the Nineteenth Century* has been republished and is at present one of the most popular books in France.

But it is to his dramatic works that he is indebted for a seat in the French Academy (1856), where he succeeded Ancelot, author of the famous tragedy of *Louis IX*.

His principal dramas are: *Louise de Lignerolles*, a prose piece, in five acts, which furnished Mademoiselle Mars with her last and one of her finest creations, and still occupies a prominent position in the repertory of the *Théâtre-Français*. In collaboration with Eugene Scribe, he composed three famous works, *Adrienne Lecouvreur*, *The Ladies' Battle*, and *The Queen of Navarre's Stories*, all acted at the *Théâtre-Français*

with immense success. *Adrienne* in particular had an extraordinary run, owing to Rachel's wonderful personation of the title rôle. To another production of our author's, *Medea*, written expressly for her, the illustrious *tragédienne* took such an unconquerable dislike that, in spite of a lawsuit decided against her, she could never be induced to play it. The pretty heavy damages which she was compelled to pay in punishment for her obstinacy, M. Legouvé made over to two beneficial societies established for the relief of distressed dramatic authors and literary men in général. *Medea*, translated into Italian by Montanelli, has been played by Madame Ristori, as is well known, all over Europe and America with the most decided success.

Among his other most remarkable dramas are: *By Right of Conquest*, *Fairy Fingers*, *Beatrice or the Madonna of Art* (written to give Madame Ristori an opportunity of appearing in French drama), *Miss Suzanne*, and in a lighter vein, *The Young Man that does nothing*, *A Game that two can play at*, etc.

All these pieces are full of sprightliness, wit, movement, and a close observation of men and manners; the language is always refined and elegant; and the style, though without pretending to Academic severity, is remarkably pure, clear and forcible.

In the Franco-Prussian war, Legouvé, though sixty-three years of age, refused to quit Paris. On the gloomiest days of that terrible period, he was to be found lecturing to well-filled halls in the College of France, on the necessity of *moral as well as physical nourishment during the siege*.

NOTE 1 — LEGOUVÉ — page 10.

JEAN BAPTISTE LEGOUVÉ (1764-1812), dramatic author, excellent poet, member of the French Academy in 1793 and at its reorganization in 1803, was for several years, during Delille's absence, professor of Latin Poetry in the College of France. His poems, though somewhat lacking in fire, were remarkable for elegance of language, richness of illustration, and exquisite delicacy of sentiment. His *Mérite des Femmes* (Women's Merit) is still highly esteemed.

Note 2 — DUCHESNOIS — page 10.

JOSEPHINE RAFIN (1777-1835), better known by her assumed name Mademoiselle Duchesnois, famous tragic actress, for thirty years one of the glories of the *Théâtre-Français*, in spite of the homeliness of her features and the beauty of her great rival Mademoiselle Georges, owed almost everything to nature and her own determination, very little to education or fortune. She played with such exquisite sensibility as to be surnamed the daughter of Racine. Her first and last part in the *Français* was *Phedra*, but those in which she was most admired were *Joan of Arc* in Avrigny's tragedy, and *Mary Stuart* in Lebrun's. With Mademoiselle Duchesnois and Talma French classic drama came to an end, until it was revived by Rachel.

Note 3 — RACINE — page 11.

JEAN RACINE (1639-1699), if not exactly the Euripides of French tragedy as Corneille has been called its Sophocles, is certainly the most perfect, the most charming and the most highly finished of all the French tragic poets. His style has never been equalled for lucidity, strength and sweetness. No poet has ever surpassed him in delineating the delicate, undying and unselfish qualities of woman's love. His heroines will perhaps remain forever as the finest and truest types (Shakespeare's not excepted) of the tender, the exquisitely pathetic, and the uncalculating element of feminine nature. In alluding to Shakespeare we make every allowance for the vastness and sublimity of his genius, but we must remember that he was not cramped, confined and tied down like Racine; that the French poet wrote, not for the indiscriminate audience of a London theatre where rabble was as plentiful as nobility, but exclusively for the most elegant, fastidious, and critical court that ever existed; that from first to last in all his dramas a certain difficult and monotonous rhymed version was rigidly insisted on; that humor was wholly excluded, and that the *unities* of time, action and place, were to be observed as closely as possible. Comparing all this with the freedom, the license, the boundless

resources freely permitted to the English poet, and reflecting a little on the matter, we may begin to have a glimpse of the reason why Voltaire called Shakespeare an *inspired barbarian*.

The three best of his educational years, from 16 to 19, Racine spent in the famous monastery of Port Royal, near Versailles, where he as much surprised his teachers by his rapid progress, particularly in Greek, as he delighted them by his gentle, affectionate but rather serious disposition. As for him the impression made both on his heart and head by the great Arnauld and the other learned fathers died out only with his life. Completing his education in a Paris college, he wrote some Latin verses on the King's marriage which so pleased Louis XIV. that he sent the young poet a purse of 100 *louis* and soon after conferred on him a small pension for life. In the house of his uncle, an old priest in Languedoc, he spent the next four or five years hesitating between theology and poetry, but in 1664 the latter carried the day—at least for a time—and he came to Paris to try his fortune as dramatic author. His first plays were only fairly successful, but *Andromache* was received with an enthusiasm recalling the grandest triumphs of the great Corneille. In twelve years he produced ten or a dozen tragedies which no French writer has ever since surpassed in grandeur, sublimity, tender majesty, noble emotion—all, if rather above man in his nature, at least consistent, truthful and to this day intensely interesting. In 1673 he was made a member of the French Academy, and in 1677 he produced *Phedra*, perhaps the grandest of all his works, the play in which Rachel produced such a tremendous sensation in our own day.

Then came a change. He had never been able to satisfy himself that his poetry was of any real benefit to mankind. Glory, genius, triumph, far from satisfying his longing heart, only disgusted it. At thirty-eight he suddenly announced his intention to quit the world forever by turning Trappist. It was with the utmost difficulty that his friends, chiefly his confessor, succeeded in overcoming or rather modifying his determination by persuading him—since he *was* resolved to quit public life—at least to take some worthy woman as a wife to console him in his solitude. He became the father of a family, whom he



would never allow even to talk of plays; though being appointed historiographer to the King, he still led a life not quite as retired as he would like. Keeping as much aloof from the world as possible, he divided his time into three parts, giving one-third to God, one-third to his family, and one-third to the King. He visited Louis occasionally at court, who loved to converse with him and to hear him read; he even accompanied him on several military expeditions in order to be able to see for himself the events he was expected to relate. But poetry and the drama he renounced so completely that he could not bear even to hear his works spoken of. Being sent for one day and told that it was the King's pleasure that he should give a few lessons in elocution to one of the princesses, he hurried to her room, but finding that he was expected to teach her how to recite some verses from *Andromache* which she had got by heart, he hastily withdrew and asked as a favor that he would never again be called to give any such lesson.

His last two dramas, *Esther* and his masterpiece *Athalie*, were not, however, any violation of the sacred engagement into which he had entered with God. By preparing dramas of this harmless kind for representation by the young ladies at the famous conventual establishment at Saint Cyr, he flattered himself for a while that he was only transforming and sanctifying the art which he had abjured, and sacrificing, as it were, his genius to the glory of religion. But even these considerations soon ceased to calm his sensitive conscience; the very applause he received filled him with scruples; these two pieces ended, notwithstanding Madame de Maintenon's importunity, he could never be persuaded to write another. Never forgetful, however, of the claims of duty, in 1684, when Thomas Corneille entered the French Academy as successor to his brother Pierre, Racine pronounced on the memory of the latter the discourse alluded to on page 81, which is universally acknowledged to be the justest and noblest tribute of eulogy that ever issued from the lips of a rival.

Henceforth (1687-1699), we see Racine presenting the touching spectacle of a great man humbling himself, abasing himself,



trying to content himself with being nothing more than a fervent Christian, a devoted friend, and a loving, thoughtful father. His letters plainly reveal the passionate soul fluttering in its self-imposed cage, the poet's impassioned heart suppressing its sublime longings with heroic abnegation. Writing to his friend Boileau about some *critique* on his works, he says: "God has been graciously pleased to render me insensible to everything that can be said of my tragedies either in praise or censure; I now occupy myself only with thinking what excuse I can offer HIM for having so foolishly misspent my time."

In his quality of historiographer, he still visited the court now and then and, in spite of himself, took some pleasure in the contemplation of its splendors, in the marks of respect and affection with which he was received by his friends, and in the honor that was always shown him by the King. But even these little gratifications did not last to the end of his life. He suddenly lost the King's favor in a way as creditable to himself as it was discreditable to all the other parties. His son Louis, a man in every way worthy of such a father, gives the following account of the trouble: "Madame de Maintenon, privately conversing with him one day on the misery brought upon the people by the desolating war then raging, was so pleased with the justness of his remarks that she requested him to set down his opinions in writing. He consented to do so, receiving a promise of secrecy, and soon afterwards placed a treatise in her hands, containing some severe strictures upon the condition of the country and the continuation of the war. While she was reading it, the King entered suddenly and took it from her hand; he insisted on knowing the author, which, after a faint resistance, in spite of her pledge, she revealed. The King's face darkened. 'Because he knows how to make perfect verses,' said he, 'does he think he is a minister of state?' A little while after this, he ventured to solicit some small favor from the King; it was refused." The poor, sensitive poet was stung to the quick and deeply grieved by this "disgrace;" his grief was, however, felt less severely on his own account than on that of his children who were still very young. His health was not

good, and his bad spirits made it worse. His melancholy increased, but his gentleness and engaging manners continued the same to the last. Towards the end of 1698 he fell ill of an abscess of the liver, which carried him off after some months' painful sufferings borne with the courage of a martyr and the resignation of a Christian.

Note 4—CORNEILLE—page 11.

PIERRE CORNEILLE (1606–1684), surnamed by his countrymen “the great,” the father of French tragedy, if not the first real developer of French dramatic genius, educated by the Jesuits, began life as a lawyer at Rouen, but soon surrendered himself to poetic composition. Even his very first plays were highly relished, being an immense improvement on what the public had been accustomed to witness, and already manifesting ingenious combination, animated dialogue, skilful plot and striking situations. He soon attracted the notice of Richelieu, at that time not only the all-powerful minister of France but also the generous patron of struggling men of letters, and received from the treasury a promising pension. Finding, however, that several innovations in the detail rather than in the principle of the rules at that time insisted on for dramatic composition, and suggested altogether by his own taste and good sense, were displeasing to the Cardinal, Corneille did not hesitate to surrender his pension at once, and quietly withdrew to private life, seeing no other way whereby he could give way without constraint to the inspirations and resources of dramatic art.

He was now thirty years old, and he felt that his genius had come to its maturity. By the advice of an old friend he studied Spanish, and was soon revelling in the masterpieces of Spanish literature at that time enjoying its golden era. The result was *The Cid*, in many eyes the poet's masterpiece, and certainly the corner-stone of French tragedy. The subject was grand and ennobling, the terrible struggle of mighty passions against mighty passions, of sublime duty against both, at once lifting the souls of the audience aloft and profoundly touching their hearts. Never

before had anything like it appeared on the French stage. The public enthusiasm knew no bounds. But it would seem that by this success Corneille rendered himself again displeasing to Richelieu, who felt offended at the triumphs accorded to a writer who, as everybody well knew, had had the courage to brave him by resigning his pension. In a public letter of Corneille's too written at this time some verses appeared in which he boasted that he had employed no underhand means to obtain friends and that his success was due to himself alone. The public, whether rightly or wrongly, considered these lines to be levelled at the Cardinal, who, much irritated, ordered the French Academy, just then created and entirely depending on the great Minister for its very existence, to pronounce either for *The Cid* or for a severe, violent and unjust criticism that had been lately written against it by another poet—Scudéry. Everybody expected nothing less than an act of base submission, but the Academy was faithful to itself in this critical juncture; it expressed in unqualified terms its highest admiration for the great and numerous beauties of *The Cid*, though it did not hesitate at the same time to find fault with some of what it considered decided imperfections in the great drama.

The greatest and most obvious fault to be found with Corneille's two tragedies *Medea* and *The Cid* was their alleged want of originality, one being said to be taken from the Latin and the other from the Spanish. In reality nothing had been taken from either but the subject. But such cavillings were soon hushed forever by the appearance of *Horace* and *Cinna* (1639), *Polyeucte* (1640), *Pompée* (1641), and *Rodogune* (1646). *Horace* electrified the public. Its sublime energy and profoundly dramatic situations took them by storm. It contains the famous *Qu'il mourût*, alluded to on page 65, of which Voltaire, Corneille's most unsparing though on the whole perhaps most judicious critic, says: "There is nothing like it in all antiquity; the whole audience was so transported, with it at its first hearing that they rose *en masse* and drowned in storms of applause the weak line that followed it."

The defects of *Cinna* were more than amply compensated for

by its beauties, one of its scenes being unsurpassed by anything ever written, but it is *Polyeucte* that is generally considered the highest effort of Corneille's genius; it is at least the most perfect of his plays; its interesting plot unites with great effect the graceful and the tender with the powerful and the sublime. This is the kind of tragedy that Racine soon carried to perfection. In *Le Menteur* (1642) comedy too had got its first start from Corneille; this memorable work gave such a lively and natural picture of the manners of the time that Molière may be very justly considered as having taken it for a model of what genuine comedy ought to be; in fact he acknowledged him openly as his master and the first dramatist of the age.

He was now in the zenith of his success (1647); he was a member of the French Academy; he had long since become the friend and *protégé* of Richelieu; and his pension had been restored—still a small one, it is true, and after the death of his noble patron often neglected and even suspended.

From this date, however, his powers seemed to decline. His remaining plays, though full of fine passages, are often deficient in construction and were perhaps written too hurriedly under pressure of pecuniary difficulties. One of them, *Pertharite*, failed so lamentably that he withdrew for a long time from the theatre altogether, deeply displeased with what he perhaps considered the fickleness of the public taste. To give his active mind something to do in his retirement, he devoted several years to translating into French verse A' Kempis's *Imitation of Christ*, an employment helping both to soothe his troubles and to nourish the sentiments of piety which from his childhood he had always entertained. This translation is still greatly admired and has reached already more than forty different editions.

In 1659, at the instigation of his friend and patron Fouquet, superintendent of finances, Corneille appeared again before the public, but none of his new tragedies met with anything like his former success, and the old poet had the additional mortification of seeing his glories almost completely effaced in the splendor surrounding his young and brilliant rival Racine.

But later generations have done Corneille full justice. They



grant his extreme inequality, that his style is often injured by bombastic declamations, his action deadened by long conversations, his incidents dulled by endless arguments, his naturalness spoiled by too close an adherence to the *unities*. But for much of this they blame his age more than himself, and now, nearly two hundred years after his death, the world still admires his energetic, rousing, and reverberating verses, his striking contrasts of the great passions, his vivid portraiture of antique grandeur, his skilful handling of historical detail, his sudden flashes of true sublimity, his kindling warmth, his rugged strength, and his honest simplicity of heart.

This great man was well read, and of irreproachable morals, but his temper was hasty, his countenance stern, his manners rather blunt, and his conversational powers, perhaps from physical defect, by no means remarkable.

The friendship and intimacy existing between him and his illustrious brother THOMAS CORNEILLE, considered by Voltaire to be the third dramatic author of the time, gives us a pleasant idea of the simplicity of family life in the seventeenth century. Pierre and Thomas married two sisters between whom existed the same difference of age as between themselves. They had the same number of children. They lived continually in the same house, whether at Paris or Rouen, and had the same servant. For twenty-five years of married life they never thought of dividing their wives' property, until this division was rendered absolutely necessary by the death of Pierre whom Thomas, twenty years younger, survived by twenty-five years. A French biographical work says of Corneille: "While the Academy was endeavoring to correct the language which Pascal was destined to fix and Racine to polish, Corneille created and formed it, by giving it force and precision in reasoning, energy and depth in discourse, elevation and sublimity in sentiment, and dignity and majesty in the utterance of kings and heroes."

Napoleon was an intense admirer of Corneille; he called him at once France's Shakespeare and Dante, and often said if he had lived during the empire that he would have made him a prince.

Note 5 — MOLIÈRE — page 11.

JEAN BAPTISTE POQUELIN (1622-1673), better known by his assumed name de Molière, the prince of French comic poets, perhaps the greatest comic dramatist of any age or country, was the son of one of the upholsterers of the palace who afterwards became one of the King's *valets-de-chambre*. Expected by his father to follow his own humble occupation, he was hardly able to read or write at fourteen; but being often taken by his grandfather to the *Hotel de Bourgogne*, the chief theatre at that time in Paris and the scene of all Corneille's and Racine's masterpieces, young Poquelin was so delighted with what he saw there that he easily persuaded his father to give him a good education. He spent five years in the Jesuit College of Clermont, making very good use of his time, one of his teachers being Gassendi, the famous astronomer.

In 1641 his education was finished, and Poquelin's father being now old and infirm, the son took his place as *valet-de-chambre* to the King (Louis XIII.); but his court duties could not have been very absorbing, for he seems to have formed a number of young folks, passionately fond of theatricals like himself, into a kind of company whose fame soon grew so great that from amateurs they became professionals, opening a little theatre for themselves, very much relished by the public under the name of the *Théâtre Illustre*. It was at this time, that to spare the feelings of his family who looked on his association with play-actors as a degradation, he adopted the surname Molière, the name of a well-known actor and author of the day.

The civil disturbance known as the *Fronde* (1648-1654) broke up the *Théâtre Illustre*, but even before the return of peace we find him strolling through the provinces at the head of a little troupe, playing farces and other light pieces generally of his own composition. *L'Etourdi*, his first seriously constructed piece, a five-act comedy in verse, was given at Lyons in 1653 with so much success that the actors of a rival troupe, by breaking their engagements and joining Molière, enabled him to resume his rambling trip through southern France with greater



success than ever as manager, actor and poet, his liveliness, observation, good-humor and highly original genius enabling him to turn every vicissitude to the best account.

At Béziers he played the *Dépit Amoureux* before the Prince of Conti, one of his old school-fellows at the Jesuit College; the Prince, a member of the blood royal, was so charmed with Molière that he wished to make him his secretary for life with a good salary, but this offer the poet respectfully declined, preferring liberty to every other consideration, and continuing the adventurous, precarious, but exciting life of a strolling manager for five years longer. The Prince, however, did not forget him, and finding him in Paris in 1658, he recommended him so strongly to Louis XIV. and to the King's brother the Duke of Orleans, whose title was *Monsieur*, that Molière was not only permitted to rent conjointly with an Italian company the *Petit-Bourbon* theatre, but also to designate his actors as the *Troupe de Monsieur*.

His first serious effort here was the *Précieuses Ridicules*, a humorous though rather farcical satire directed against an over-refinement in language and manners affected by many well known court ladies. At its very first appearance its superior merit was recognized. "Courage, Molière!" cried an old gentleman in the audience, "that's true comedy!" All Paris rushed to see it, and though the price of admission was trebled the piece had a run of four months. True comedy has never since quitted the French stage.

From the *Petit-Bourbon* he soon removed to the theatre of the *Palais Royal*, inaugurating his entry, however, very unsuccessfully with a play of the severe kind, *Don Garcia de Navarre*, not at all suitable to his talents, to attempt which, however, he had been unwisely induced by the sneers of envious rivals. In 1661 *L'Ecole des Maris* easily restored his reputation by its rich humor and thorough faithfulness to human nature; and in the same year appeared *Les Fâcheux*, a piece written, learned, and played within a fortnight to celebrate the famous fête gotten up by Fouquet to welcome Louis's visit to his château at Vaux. In spite of the haste of its composition, the King

enjoyed its wit and fun hugely and his laughter was echoed by all Paris.

Every year his theatre was enriched by something new from his ready pen, *L'Ecole des Femmes*, *Le Mariage forcé*, *Amour Médecin*, etc., coming out in quick succession. In 1665 his *Don Juan* appeared, and in 1666 *Le Misanthrope*, a perfect comedy in which the style is faultless and nothing seems to be lacking to the naturalness, the reality, or the truth of the personages represented. This is generally considered to be his masterpiece, though, strange to say, the public at first hardly appeared to relish it, and he bitterly complains that an audience had to be dragged to its representation by the roaring farce of *Le Médecin malgré lui* (the Mock Doctor).

Molière seemed now to be at the culmination of his wishes. His company received a pension of 7000 *livres* a year and bore the name of the *Troupe du Roi*, and himself was held in such high esteem that Louis stood at the baptismal font as godfather to his first child, the godmother being no less than Henrietta of England, the widowed queen of Charles the First. But he was anything but happy. His health had never been good, and he was occupied so incessantly that he could never give it a moment's careful attention. He loved his young wife to distraction, but she made him miserable by her reckless levities. His wit, humor and untiring industry kept the world in good humor, but his enemies and rivals often rendered him wretched by their bitter criticisms to which indeed a coarse passage or two in his plays gave severe point, or by their outrageous reports on his morality to which he was too proud or too sensitive to reply. But many of the best men of the day eagerly sought his friendship and carefully cultivated it. Boileau in particular endeavored to cheer him up by frequent testimonies of profound admiration given in public as well as private. The haughty courtiers, jealous of what they called a valet's influence with the King, and insulting him with cowardly sneers in the ante-chambers, felt themselves obliged to cringe before him and loudly extol his merits whenever they met him face to face in the King's presence. Louis indeed never ceased to appreciate

the man, always showing himself generous, benevolent and friendly. It is a well known story that he invited the poet one morning to a private breakfast with himself in order to show that what was good company enough for the King should be good enough even for his highest nobility.

Our short sketch is getting too long. In 1667 appeared his celebrated *Tartufe*, so well known in English as *The Hypocrite*, and in 1668, *L'Avare*, "The Miser," his first great comedy in prose. In 1670 he gave the world his famous *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, "as well known on the shores of the Caspian as in Paris;" in 1671 the *Fourberies de Scapin*; in 1672 *Les Femmes Savantes*, and in 1673 his last if not his best, *Le Malade Imaginaire*, the "Hypochondriac," alluded to on page 79.

For some time his health had been failing, still he was determined even against the advice of his friends to act once more the part of *Argan* in *Le Malade* on the evening of Feb. 17, 1673. Doctor he had none. He hated the whole tribe; partly because the majority of physicians at that time were excessively ignorant and pretentious, partly because he had tried them in his own case and found them sadly wanting. To his remonstrating friends he simply replied: "I *must* appear this time at least. How can my poor workmen live if I don't? As long as I am able to move I shall scruple depriving them of bread a single day." He played the piece; but in the last act where the *Doctors* perform the mock ceremony in mock Latin, just as he was trying to pronounce the word *juro*, a convulsion attacked him which he strove in vain to hide under a forced smile. He was instantly conveyed to his own house, where two Sisters, making their regular Lenten quest for the poor of Paris, happened at the moment to be staying with his wife. While Madame Molière was getting restoratives and sending for priest and physician, the good Sisters showed the suffering man every attention that their charity could think of; but his hemorrhages grew worse, and he had time only to say a few words in which he revealed all the sentiments of a good Christian and complete submission to the will of his Creator, when he died in their

arms a few minutes before the arrival of the priest who had come to administer the last sacrament.

In those days the Church usually denounced the profession of players as infamous, but in consideration of Molière's well-known merit and generally correct conduct, the ordinary regulation was not enforced. He was allowed to be buried in the parish cemetery, the funeral, however, having to take place in the night-time and only two priests being allowed to be present at the ceremony.

Huet, the learned bishop of Avranches, Normandy, wrote the following epitaph in honor of Molière's memory :

*Plaudebat, Moleri, tibi plenis aula theatris ;  
Nunc eadem moerens post tua fata gemit.  
Si risum nobis movisses parcius olim,  
Parcius, heu ! lacrymis tingeret ora dolor.*

(Molière, the court that so often honored thy appearance on the stage with applause the loudest now honors thee in thy grave with grief the most profound ; smiles innumerable thy presence once shed around thee, tears innumerable now gush from our eyes at thy absence !)

In twenty years he had composed thirty-one comedies, of which nearly one-half are incomparable masterpieces, and in the other half are scenes which his most illustrious successors have not surpassed. On account of his profession he was not made a Member of the French Academy during his life, but in a prominent position, under the dome of the Institute, can be seen to-day his bust, bearing the flattering inscription :

*Rien ne manque à sa gloire ; il manquait à la nôtre.*  
(Nothing is wanting to his glory ; he was wanting to ours.)

Note 6 — CONSERVATOIRE — page 11.

THE CONSERVATOIRE DE MUSIQUE ET DE DÉCLAMATION of Paris, in the buildings once occupied by the Monks of Saint Martin, is at present the most famous music school in the world. It has seventy teachers, and its nine hundred pupils receive gratuitous instruction. It is the great training-school for theatre and opera.

Note 7—**BOUILLY**—page 11

JEAN NICHOLAS BOUILLY (1763-1842), dramatist and educational writer of some celebrity. His best play is *L'Abbé de Epée*, still well known on the French stage. His *Stories for my daughter*, *Counsels to my daughter*, *Young Women*, and other educational works were read with avidity by the last generation and, in spite of their somewhat florid style, are not yet forgotten. He was the elder Legouv  's friend, and our author's faithful guardian.

Note 8—**STRADIVARIUS**—page 12.

ANTONIO STRADIVARIUS (1670-1746), native of Cremona, pupil of the Amati, the famous violin manufacturers, surpassed even his masters by the perfection to which he brought his instruments. A *Stradivarius* to-day that is about 160 or 180 years old commands a price of \$3000.

Note 9—**SAMSON**—page 12.

JOSEPH ISIDORE SAMSON (1793-1871), born near Paris, distinguished at once as dramatic artist, dramatic author, associate of the *Th   tre-Fran  ais*, and professor of elocution at the *Conservatoire*. His characters about 250 in number, though now and then rather dry, were distinguished by a rare elegance and individuality; among the most remarkable may be mentioned the *Marquis* in *Le Fils de Giboyer*. His best drama is perhaps *Le Dot de ma Fille*; and among his most famous pupils were Rachel and the two Brohans.

Note 10—**PROVOST**—page 12.

JEAN BAPTISTE FRAN  OIS PROVOST (1798-1865), born at Paris, associate of the *Th   tre-Fran  ais* where he mainly excelled in plays of the old school, but his impersonations of *Charrier* the banker and *Mar  chal* the deputy in Augier's well-known plays were rendered with great effect. He was distinguished for naturalness, fire and elegance.



Note 11 — REGNIER — page 12.

FRANÇOIS JOSEPH REGNIER (1807 —) played for a long time with Samson and Provost the leading comic parts in the classical, romantic, and contemporary drama. He is perhaps best remembered in the pathetic part of the old servant in Madame Girardin's little piece, *La joie fait peur*, the rôle so excellently played by Boucicault in his adaptation of *Kerry*. Regnier was also professor of dramatic elocution at the *Conservatoire*, and he has had considerable share in the composition of several popular comedies.

Note 12 — GOT — page 12.

FRANÇOIS J. E. GOT (1822 —), probably the first comic actor of the day in the *Théâtre-Français*. He is distinguished for his great power and masterly finish. Among his most successful creations are *Jean de Rieux* in *Le Duc Job*, and *Giboyer* in Augier's remarkable drama.

Note 13 — DELAUNAY — page 12.

LOUIS ARSÈNE DELAUNAY (1826 —), born in Paris, has been for the last fifteen or twenty years the most indispensable of all the male artists of the *Théâtre-Français*. Though now fifty-three, he is still as distinguished as ever for his fine person, his grace, warmth, poetic naturalness, and particularly for his pure diction and clear silvery voice. He is most at home in classic comedy, but he has played some of the great parts of the modern stage with extraordinary success.

Note 14 — MARS — page 13.

ANNE FRANÇOISE MARS (1779-1847), born at Paris, daughter of the actor Monvel, but always known by her mother's name, was for thirty years the undisputed queen of the *Théâtre-Français*, succeeding Mademoiselle Contat in 1812, and not quitting the stage until 1841. At first, however, though always remarkable for her beauty, grace, and enchanting voice, her success was by no means remarkable; but by continual and careful study she at last acquired such perfection of style as to be justly



surnamed the *Inimitable*. Beginning with the part of the deaf and dumb girl in Bouilly's drama of *L'Abbé de l'Épée*, she created more than a hundred parts, one of the most wonderful being that of *Mademoiselle de Belle Isle* in the elder Dumas's play, where, though sixty years of age, she displayed all the life, beauty and charming freshness of a young woman of twenty.

Note 15 — RACHEL — page 13.

ELIZABETH RACHEL FELIX (1820-1858), the meteoric actress of our century, and in many respects the grandest *tragédienne* that ever lived, was born in Switzerland of poor French-Jewish parents, who were travelling through the country in the humble avocation of peddlers. In Lyons they opened an old-clothes store, and the children sang in the streets, little Rachel strumming an old guitar, and collecting the coppers. After a while they removed to Paris, continuing pretty much the same kind of life, the father, a keen man of great intelligence, also giving lessons in German. The appearance of the children exciting some interest, somebody procured their admission into the *Conservatoire*, which institution Rachel, who had no singing voice, soon left to learn elocution under Professor St. Aulaire in his private theatre. Here she studied till 1836, when Samson, a professor at the *Conservatoire*, was so struck by her style of recitation that he induced her to enter that famous school again, into which she gained ready admittance in spite of her dwarfed bony figure. But the change hardly improved her prospects. Provost, another famous professor, hearing her recite one day, told her without ceremony that she had *the voice of a costermonger*.

"Go sell bouquets, child," said he, "that's all you'll ever be fit for." Her voice at this time, in fact, was so rough that an operation had to be performed on her tonsils to improve it.

Greatly discouraged, she left the *Conservatoire*, but her old teacher St. Aulaire soon procured her an engagement at the *Gymnase*. Her *début* in *La Vendéenne*, a drama written for her expressly by Paul Duport, attracted some attention. "This

child of fifteen," said the *Débats*, "though she will never be cried up as a wonder, possesses soul, heart, intellect, but very little skill; . . . she excites tears, emotion, interest." Still her strong peculiarities, her gravity, her occasional attempts at sublimity, her small, slim, angular figure, soon ceased to interest the general public. Forrest, however, who happened to be in Paris about this time on his wedding tour, had no hesitation in saying to the manager: "That Jewish-looking girl, the little bag-of-bones with the marble face and the flaming eyes, is possessed of a power actually demoniacal!"

Samson too, who had been interested in her from the beginning, and who continued to be her truest friend as long as she lived, had no difficulty in getting her engagement at the *Gymnase* cancelled and procuring another for her of a provisional nature at the *Théâtre-Français*, with a salary of about 800 dollars a year. He took the greatest pains to prepare her for a successful *début*; and his labor to overcome her deficiencies, and to impart clearness, simplicity, breadth of style, with perfect purity of diction, were most enthusiastically seconded by his pupil. A characteristic anecdote is told of her life at this time.

Samson had given her two tickets in a prominent part of the house for some performance which he was desirous she should witness in the *Théâtre-Français*, but the sight of two such plainly-dressed women (Rachel and her mother) occupying such good seats was too much for the usher. "There must be some mistake about this," said he roughly: "you can't stay here. I will show you your place," and he sent them up to some back seat at the top of the house. Rachel did not say a word, smothering her resentment in her keen desire to see the play, but Samson was exceedingly indignant.

"The day will come," cried he to the usher, "when the little girl you have treated so rudely will make you tremble in your boots. She will be the sovereign queen of the house that you have tried to turn her out of!"

In June, 1838, she made her first appearance in the *Français* as *Camille* in Corneille's play of *Horace* (*the Horatii*). Her

success with the audience, such as it was, was complete, but the receipts were poor, hardly 150 dollars. In fact, the classic drama was almost dead at the time; since the days of Talma and Duchesnois, no actor had been able to keep it alive; the freedom, the variety, and the dazzling glare of the modern drama had incapacitated people from listening even with patience to long recitations in monotonous Alexandrines; the *Français* itself was heavily in debt; and the announcement of any of the old tragedies turned the once crowded house into a desert. Rachel's appearance in her other parts, *Emilie* in Corneille's *Cinna*, and *Hermione* in Racine's *Andromache*, did not much improve the appearance of things; the receipts, in fact, steadily declined. For three months not one word in her praise appeared in the papers. It is said that the *sociétaires* of the *Théâtre-Français* severely criticised her size, shape, voice and gestures, and would have at once dropped her from the list of salaried actors, but for the earnest interference of Mademoiselle Mars.

But Janin, the "Prince of Critics," was astounded at what he witnessed at the *Français* the first night after his return from his summer trip. An enthusiastic article of his in next morning's *Débats* revealed the new prodigy to the world. People came in hurrying from the country, months in advance, to see the imperishable masterpieces of old tragedy once more restored to life. Every seat was taken. Rachel electrified every audience. The most glorious days of Mademoiselle Mars and Talma were eclipsed. Louis Philippe presented himself in person to compliment the wonderful actress; he took her kindly by the hand, and next day sent her a gift of a thousand francs. The management made her engagement permanent for two years, at 1600 dollars a year, an enormous sum in those days, before the baleful system of "starring" had begun to spoil one actor, and to starve the others. They moreover presented her with three very expensive costumes, besides several extra sums of money.

This sudden prosperity seems to have keenly excited her father's cupidity, and probably her own too, which was just as fierce. Engagements with a minor, he soon found out, were

null and void, and as her natural guardian he forbade her to perform at less than 60,000 francs a year. Samson, not believing such a report, asked his pupil if it were true. Rachel replied without hesitation, that, being a minor, she had nothing to say, the *Civil Code* giving her father supreme power in such matters. Her teacher was extremely indignant at such barefaced worship of the golden calf. "I have tried to teach you declamation," said he, "not chicanery. The *Civil Code* is not the place to look for honor or decency. *Sortez !*" But she knew her business better than to quarrel with such a teacher, and they were soon again on the best of terms.

In these quarrels the public took very little concern. The general infatuation over the favorite grew greater every day. *Roxane*, a new and most difficult part in Racine's *Bajazet*, was the next triumph, Mademoiselle Mars being particularly vehement in applause. The management, feeling their impotence, compromised the matter for a while by advancing her salary from 8 to 20 thousand francs a year. Rachel became the fashionable rage. The proudest aristocratic fêtes were felt to be incomplete without her presence. Here she felt quite at home. The humility of her origin, and the poverty of her early years, had left no branding-mark either on her person or her manners. She was always *grande dame*. So keen was her intuition of the proprieties, and so ready her power of instantly adapting herself to the refinements of high life, that she never appeared out of place, even in the most brilliant and exclusive *salons* of Paris.

In spite, however, of the dazzling glamour that surrounded the young actress, even her greatest admirers could soon see that her chief *forte* lay in the delineation of the stormy, the powerful; the agonizing, the pitiless, rather than in the loving, the delicate, the attractive, and that she was inspired rather by Corneille's gloomy austerity than by Racine's enchanting tenderness; her detractors even whispered that she was only a wonderful doll of varied and ingenious mechanism, with sense enough to obey her teacher strictly, but otherwise without soul, heart, or brains. Accordingly her next attempt, *Pauline* in Racine's



*Polyeucte*, a rôle so extremely difficult that it had not been attempted for 22 years, was generally considered deficient in the pathos, gentleness, grace and innocent simplicity of Racine's famous heroine; her rendition too of Le Brun's *Marie Stuart*, though occasionally extremely powerful, and afterwards immensely improved, compared very unfavorably with the well-remembered performance of Duchesnois in the same character. Her first tour in the provinces, however, taken at her father's instigation, was extremely successful, particularly in a pecuniary point of view.

In 1841 Mademoiselle Rachel, being of age, was made *sociétaire*, or associate of the *Théâtre-Français*, with a full share, a salary of 60 thousand francs a year, and three months' *congé*, or summer recess, worth at least 30 thousand more: total, a salary equal to that paid to the Prime Minister of France. Neither her fellow-actors nor the Parisians generally, liked the way she spent these *congés*; she seemed to be in a hurry, they said, to run off and very slow to return; she barely acted twice a week in Paris, but four or five times a week in the provinces; instead of benefiting her health, she was exhausting her strength, etc., — consequently her first appearances in September, instead of arousing hearty applause, were always received in cold stern silence. This year she visited England, where her reception was a perfect ovation; she was presented by Queen Victoria with a beautiful bracelet bearing both their names beautifully set in precious stones. She resumed her old parts at the *Français* with great success, her triumph in *Marie Stuart* being intensified by the terrific vehemence by which she crushed forever a poor rival actress that had dared to appear before her as *Queen Elizabeth*.

In 1842 she attempted *Ximène* in Pierre Corneille's *Cid*, and the *Ariadne* of Thomas Corneille without much success. In 1843 she attempted Racine's *Phèdre*, but it took eleven years of hard and conscientious study to bring that finest, but most difficult of characters to perfection. In this year too she appeared in *Judith*, a tragedy written expressly for her by Madame de Girardin, but the play was not a good one, and whatever

admiration Rachel excited was mainly due to her superb costume, a magnificent creation of Chasseriau. But her visit to the south of France created a perfect *furor*, one night's receipts at the Marseilles Theatre reaching the unheard of sum of 16 hundred dollars.

In 1844 her new characters were still failures, neither her *Bérénice* of Racine, her *Isabelle* in Corneille's *Don Sancho of Arragon*, nor her *Catharine II.* of Romand attracting much attention; but, as usual, her *congé* produced a great sum of money, 8 thousand dollars being obtained by six representations in Belgium.

In 1845 her success as *Virginie*, her new part, in Latour de St. Ybar's tragedy was complete; she seemed to feel at last that for some time her glory had been on the wane; whether through her own fault or not, her sunlight had been paling; if she failed again she would have probably quitted the stage forever. Fortunately the play exactly suited her peculiar powers; she responded with all her grandeur to the emergency, and her success was most triumphant. Her *Phèdre* too was greatly improved, but her heroic attempt to resuscitate Voltaire's wretched tragedy of *Electra* ended in complete failure.

In 1846 an attempt was made to restore in all its glory the resplendent character of Joan of Arc to the French stage by reviving Soume's tragedy of the name, but the play was so poor that even Rachel's genius could not keep it alive. Her usual summer trip, this year to Holland and England, was pecuniarily as remunerative as ever, but it fatigued her so much that she was unable to present herself at the *Théâtre-Français* in September. On being remonstrated with, she sent in her resignation, probably to frighten the management into better terms, as she was well aware that it was only a ten year *sociétaire* that had the privilege of resigning, and even then a year's notice should be given beforehand. The quarrel, however, was healed up for a time, and Rachel's new rendition of *Phèdre* was pronounced to be *almost* perfection. Never before had her audience exhibited greater delight, "She is a soul of fire in an envelope of gauze!" exclaimed one of her admirers that even-



ing, the young Bey of Tunis witnessing her performance for the first time.

In 1847 her creation of *Athalie* in Racine's fine tragedy, though a character not quite suited to her powers, gave great satisfaction to the Parisians, Louis Philippe and the whole royal family honoring it with their presence and warmest approbation. Her success in Madame de Girardin's tragedy of *Cléopâtre* was also quite decided, but suddenly in the midst of her triumphs illness attacked her of so serious a nature as to keep her off the stage for three months.

She was hardly recovered when the Revolution of 1848 broke out, depriving poor old Louis Philippe of the throne on which the Revolution of 1830 had set him. All Paris, mad with excitement, cried out that the days of real liberty had come at last. Some were enthusiastic enough to adopt the red flag of revolution for the national flag of France. "No!" cried Lamartine, on that day certainly the savior of his country; "the tri-color has borne our liberty and our glory around the world; the red flag, saturated in our own people's blood, has only gone around the Champ de Mars!" In this excited state of men's minds the *Théâtre-Français*, now the *Théâtre de la République*, was thrown open on certain nights to the people. Nothing short of Corneille's grand tragedy of *Horace* could be listened to, and Rachel, catching the infection, played *Camille* with a fire and energy never before surpassed. But she did not stop here. As if driven utterly frantic by the startling events of the day, some demon possessed her to chant the *Marseillaise*, with flag and orchestral accompaniment, to houses already so infuriated as to be capable of committing the savagest excesses. Her performance was simply terrific. She declaimed the song of vengeance with all the enthusiasm that the most ferocious of the men of '92 could have desired. Fortunately the days of the bloody guillotine were gone; murderous assassins were no longer in the ascendancy; the "war-cry of Cain" therefore did very little of the harm it was capable of producing. But the cooler heads of France were rather indignant at the sight of genius allowing itself to be driven mad by a love of admiration,

and doing its best to produce a state of things which the bravest heart could not contemplate without horror.

*Lucrèce*, another "liberty" play, was next brought out before a "free" house, and extremely well received, Rachel, as usual, chanting the *Marseillaise* every evening, and grandly raising the flag; the chorus was regularly taken up by fifty pupils of the *Conservatoire*, and banners were waved, bells rung, drums beaten, guns fired, and even cannon were brought in to heighten the effect of the last stanza. The state of mind in which the bewildered audience at last left the building may be conceived, but can hardly be described.

Such things, of course, could not last long; they soon pall even on the most enthusiastic. At one of these "free nights" in April, besides the regular government officials, hardly anybody was present; the *ouvriers* and students were very few, and no woman was at all to be seen; *Phèdre* was heavy; *La Marseillaise* was the only attraction, and even that could not draw a quarter house.

On Rachel's return from her trip through the provinces, which, as usual, was perfectly successful, the farce of resignation was played again, and with such satisfaction as to obtain her a three months' intermission, in spite of a remonstrating management and an exceedingly impatient public.

Her reappearance, however, in 1849 as *Andromache* in Racine's tragedy, was universally allowed to be a magnificent performance, Louis Napoleon, President of the Republic, being one of her warmest applauders, and Rachel was once more as great a favorite as ever. This was the era of the episode of *Adrienne Lecouvreur*, so charmingly related by our author, and which ended in her complete triumph in the new and untried *rôle* of modern drama. Even her first performance was very pleasing, especially in the fourth and fifth acts. Her regular quarrel with the *Théâtre-Français* was again renewed; this time it was brought to court, and its revelations gave rise to a great deal of talk; it was decided in her favor; she gained her point, an extension of her *congé*, the object she had been aiming at for years.

In 1850 she failed in Dumas's *Mademoiselle de Belle Isle*, as might have been expected, but as *Tisbé* in Victor Hugo's *Tyrant of Padua* she completely retrieved herself in spite of the vivid memories of the all-accomplished Mars. Her *congé* of this year, lasting four months, was devoted to England and Prussia, with what success may be judged from the fact that one night she was called before the curtain twenty-one times!

In 1851 her new play *Valeria*, written expressly for her glory by Maquet and Lacroix, excited very little enthusiasm, but her *congé*, extended to nearly six months, permitted her to visit nearly all Europe from London, by Brussels to Berlin, Vienna, Venice, Rome and Naples, returning by Marseilles. Regarding her visit to Rome, the following curious anecdote went the rounds of the papers:

Meeting the Holy Father in the Vatican gardens one day, she threw herself on her knees before him, and avowed her firm resolve to be a Christian. On her return to her hotel, she remained for some time silent, walking nervously up and down the room, with knitted brow and agitated gestures. When she spoke at last before her sisters and friends, it was to utter ejaculations of admiration and awe. To the questions addressed to her she returned no direct answer, only exclaiming in broken, disjointed phrases: "Yes! This is the true faith! This is the God-inspired creed! None other could have accomplished such works! Truly I will be one of them yet!"

She had been often before heard to express a desire to receive baptism from the hands of Pius the Ninth, but she was too perfect an actress to expect that her sincerity, even in the most serious matters, should pass unquestioned.

In 1852 her new piece *Diane*, a tame tragedy by Augier, did not make much impression, and her attempt to revive *Louise de Lignerolles* by Legouvé and Dinaux, Mademoiselle Mars's great creation, was little short of a complete failure. The state of her health probably disabled her from giving these new rôles the attention they required. "I am far from strong," she writes at this time to a friend. "The public, it is true, the footlights, Father Corneille, even my costume, give me fictitious strength

enough to enable me to get through my part; that done, I re-  
iapse into powerlessness, and often remain sunk in melancholy  
until my next performance." In spite of her weakness, how-  
ever, the summer found her at Potsdam, performing *Camille*  
before the King of Prussia, the Czar of Russia, and princes,  
princesses, ambassadors, ministers, and so forth, innumerable.  
The presents she received on the occasion amounted to some-  
thing fabulous. A rest for a few months in the fall seems to  
have completely re-established her, the sight of the crowned  
heads probably entrancing her into new life.

In 1853 her performance of *Madame de Blossac* in Madame  
de Girardin's *Lady Tartufe* was considered one of her best cre-  
ations though she disliked the part exceedingly; she reconciled  
herself to it, however, because her old professor Samson took  
the part of the *Duke d'Estigny*, and both played extremely  
well. She took a short *cong  *, but early in the fall her long  
planned intention of spending a winter in Russia was publicly  
announced. The Emperor, the Minister of State, the manage-  
ment had allowed it; probably not being able to prevent it, they  
let her have her own way; in return for the favor she was to  
devote to Paris her six months' *cong  *. This leads us to her  
new trouble, alluded to already in our little sketch of Legouv  ;  
a short account of it may give an idea of the lofty way in which  
she treated everybody, particularly authors, with whom she had  
any dealings.

In 1852, complying with her positive request, Legouv   had  
written *Medea* expressly for Rachel's style and qualities, being  
short enough to be learned without much difficulty, and so con-  
structed as to keep her almost constantly on the stage. It was  
read in her own *salon* before the most distinguished wit and  
fashion of Paris, who applauded it heartily, the hostess herself  
manifesting considerable enthusiasm. It had been even re-  
hearsed twice in the theatre and publicly announced for the fall  
of 1853, when Rachel suddenly acquainted Legouv   with her con-  
templated visit to Russia, hoping that under the circumstances he  
would excuse her temporary breach of contract, and promising  
her immediate attention to *Medea* the instant she should return.



Legouv , of course, would not interpose the slightest obstacle to Mademoiselle's departure.

Her appearance in St. Petersburg, where she gave twenty-eight representations, *Adrienne* being the favorite, was a continuous triumph, and at Moscow it was just the same. Besides her share of the receipts, at least 60 thousand dollars, her presents in the shape of furs, diamonds, rings, bracelets, etc., were beyond computation. It was just before the breaking out of the Crimean War, so that it is only the reader who remembers the siege of Sebastopol (1854-5) that may also remember reading the following anecdote in the papers of the time.

After a grand dinner offered to the great French *trag dienne* by the officers of some regiment, one of the gay *militaires*, dreaming of another occupation of Paris, cried out laughingly to their departing guest :

"Not *adieu* ! Mademoiselle, only *au revoir* ! We hope to see you soon in the gay capital, where we shall be happy to drink your health in the best wines of France !"

"We shall be delighted to welcome you, gentlemen," was Rachel's ready reply, "only I'm afraid not with our best wines. France is not rich enough to give Champagne to her prisoners !"

The success of her Russian expedition was so enormous that it probably excited the idea of making a similar raid on another great country—North America. Her first act on her return, at least, was to send in her final resignation, which she was now competent to do ; and her second was to announce to Legouv  her determination not to play *Medea*. Legouv  threatened the law, and Rachel, seeing he was in earnest, promised faithfully to play it in the fall.

The wanderer's reception in Paris, as usual freezing and severe at first, as usual ended in the wildest enthusiasm. Everybody instantly saw what an extraordinary improvement had been wrought in her by her trip to Russia. Her performance there, in fact, before a people who understood her language very imperfectly, had taught her how to obtain applause by another art—pantomime. Without saying a word she could

make herself almost as interesting as when she spoke ; she absolutely incarnated her part ; no matter what else was going on, as long as she continued on the stage she attracted every eye with irresistible power. Her performance of *Phèdre* that night was nothing short of absolute perfection. This year she also signalized by helping to celebrate in a worthy manner the birthdays of the two great men, Corneille and Racine, to whom the actors of France are so much indebted. Nothing could surpass the grandeur of her *Camille* or her *Phèdre* on these two famous days.

The other parts, *Marie Stuart* in particular, by which she entered on the fall and winter campaign, also showed decided improvement, but Legouvé was compelled to remind her of her promise. Still refusing to play *Medea*, the case was tried in the courts and for the moment became the talk of all Europe. As she was clearly in the wrong, the judges could not help deciding against her, ordering her to pay by way of damages 200 francs a day until she should play the piece. Even this decision she contrived to elude, and finally settled the matter by paying \$1000, a sum which Legouvé immediately made over to two societies established for the relief of distressed literary men.

But Legouvé soon had his vengeance, if he desired any. In *Rosemonde*, another play written expressly for her, containing every requisite she desired, being short, easily gotten up, and keeping her before the audience all the time, she suffered a most signal failure. The *Czarine* also, written for her by Scribe, was dropped after a few unsatisfactory nights. Such failures, due altogether to her own want of taste or judgment, not only soured her temper but considerably irritated the public against their former idol. This state of the Parisian mind was shown particularly by the reception accorded to the famous Ristori, who visited the French capital in May of this year (1854) and was greeted by an exceedingly flattering welcome. The Parisians probably wanted the kind of variety that the illustrious Italian actress could just give them. The union she so well represented of a tender, dreamy, poetic nature combined with electric passion and splendid intelligence, together with her



well known noble and generous character, took all hearts completely by storm.

Rachel had no notion of surrendering without a struggle. She did everything in her power to win back her subjects' former allegiance. She appeared almost every night in June. She played all her best parts in her best style. But the old enthusiasm was painfully lacking on the part of the audience. The town rang every day with tributes to the beauty, the simplicity, the great talents of her illustrious rival. Her resolution was instantly taken. Whatever hesitation she might have entertained before soon came to an end. Towards the close of July she left Paris on her ill-starred trip to America.

Her own idea in this may have been to punish the capricious Parisians; the idea certainly entertained by her family was to gain sudden and princely fortunes by laying under contribution the great Republic of the West. The generous Yankees had showered at least 240 thousand golden dollars on Jenny Lind; why not shower 500 thousand on Rachel? Of this sum Rachel was to get the half; of the other half her sisters were to receive a goodly share; and the remainder, after paying expenses, was to belong to her brother. She was not of course without friends who told her that such dreams were visionary; that, while a singer or a dancer is at home everywhere, a great tragic actress even in her own country can be relished only by a few; that democratic America should not be measured by aristocratic England where even the middle classes are generally well acquainted with the French language; that her brother Raphael, an ignorant and inexperienced youth, could not be compared for an instant with that emperor of managers, the all-accomplished Barnum, etc., etc. All this was no doubt perfectly true. Still it did not shake her confidence in America. In a pecuniary sense she was probably quite right. America *is* a great country. What it is capable of doing nobody can tell till the time comes.

Her stay of two weeks in London was exceedingly brilliant, but she had never met anything in London or anywhere else equal to her reception in New York on Sept. 3, 1855, where the magnificent sum of \$5200 was received on her opening night.

Though this was little more than one-half of Jenny Lind's famous greeting, yet, being freely given and without any clap-trap or humbug employed to obtain it, it was far from discouraging. In *Les Horaces* she had made her *début*, but *Phèdre*, and *Adrienne* also brought overflowing houses; the latter, being the favorite, was given several times, its melodramatic character catching the eye better than the cold classic drama where the entrance to the soul is mainly through the ear.

But in the midst of all this glory the fell disease, consumption, which had been threatening Rachel so long and of which her favorite sister had already died, at last began to show itself with the most alarming symptoms. Unacquainted with the treacherous character of the American climate, she had attended some Hebrew festival on a beautiful September day, clad in a light summer dress; a sudden fall of temperature in the evening gave her a cold chill from which she never recovered. An ill-advised request from her admirers did not improve the delicate condition of her lungs. Remembering the intense enthusiasm she had excited by singing the *Marseillaise* in Paris in 1848, they insisted on her repeating it in New York in 1856! Times, places, and circumstances were all changed. Besides, she was suffering severely from her cold. No matter: the public insisted and it had to be done. She sang the *Marseillaise*, chanted it rather, and curiosity increased the receipts for some time by about a thousand dollars a night.

Her visit to Boston did her health no good, but her success there was far more brilliant than in New York, her last night especially being a great success, many of the Harvard boys coming on the stage as "supes" to have a good look at the famous *tragédienne* as she chanted the *Marseillaise*. On her return to New York she gave performances every second night for nearly two weeks to very good houses. So far, indeed, her pecuniary success had been quite satisfactory; before starting for Philadelphia she had sent as much as 60 thousand dollars to France, but her cough was decidedly worse.

On a cold raw November evening, the 19th, she made her first and last appearance in the Walnut Street theatre, Philadel-

phia, in her favorite character of *Camille*. By some mismanagement the house had not been warmed! Whoever the culprit was, he certainly shortened the days of poor Rachel. As she sat, shivering in her shawl, waiting in the slips for her turn to come on the stage, her hacking cough was painful to hear. Next day she was unable to rise, and the doctors instantly ordered her off to a warmer climate.

She moved slowly to Charleston, where her physician enjoined a state of absolute repose for at least six months: nothing else could save her; but, feeling a little stronger, with her well-known obstinacy and reckless disregard of consequences, she played *Adrienne* with extraordinary force and pathos on December 17, for the last time in America, for the last time on earth.

Her voyage to Havana brought no improvement, greatly to the disappointment of the enthusiastic Cubans who were longing to give her the solidest proofs of their profound appreciation. Absolute rest being now a matter of necessity, on the 28th of January she returned to France. As a money speculation, her trip had been, as far as it went, highly successful, her forty-two performances having produced on an average between 3 and 4 thousand dollars each. But it had ruined her health forever. This was plain to everybody but herself. Henceforth life! life! was her only cry. The spring and summer she spent at a friend's house on the Seine twenty or thirty miles west of Paris; the winter she passed in Egypt. In May, 1857, she returned to France, and in September started for Cannet on the Mediterranean shores. Our author, with whom she had long since become quite reconciled, has already described one of the scenes of her last illness. After much suffering she died without a sigh on Jan. 3, 1858, in the presence of her sister Sarah and some members of a Jewish synagogue summoned at the last moment.

It was said in the papers of the time that she died a Catholic, but of this there seems to be no stronger evidence than that during her long illness she had constantly worn on her bosom an image of the Blessed Virgin and that her favorite reading

book, as long as she could read at all, had been the "Imitation of Christ."

Our sketch of Rachel has been already too long, but the following account of her *début* in her favorite part *Camille* may not prove uninteresting. It is Janin, the "Prince of Critics," who tells us how the doors of the *Théâtre-Français* came first to be opened to its future imperious queen.

"In the summer of 1838, some half-dozen persons had assembled in the darkened theatre, glad to escape the blaze of the noonday sun, but anxious to get through the wearisome task before them — that of hearing for the hundredth time perhaps the finest poetry in the French language marred by the wretched delivery of a new claimant for the *three débuts* granted to those deemed worthy, the judges being to decide whether the public should be allowed to experience the *ennui* which they themselves had tested.

"The appearance of the neophyte was not prepossessing. Scant, mean apparel, a pale face and a meagre figure, betokened a childhood spent amidst the want and privations attendant on poverty, and gave the idea that at that very moment the girl might be suffering from hunger. What could be hoped from such a source? Who could have ventured to prophesy that the shadow before them was the reality and the life — the resurrection of the art; that the gruff but weak voice was to say to the slumbering poets 'Arise and follow me!' The assembled judges were there as a matter of form, to get through an indispensable task, and not from any conviction of its use, for they had ceased to believe in the return of the Tragic Muse, who had fled away long since, bearing in the folds of her tunic her last representatives, Talma and Duchesnois.

"The girl came forward but, contrary to all expectations, she did not, with frantic gestures, bawling voice, and time-consecrated emphasis, give the well-known

Rome! l'unique objet! de mon ressentiment!

But with eyes that suddenly gleamed like living coals in their dark orbs, she uttered in a low, deep, firm tone, as though



speaking to herself, words that really doomed the proud city to destruction :

Rome, l'unique objet de mon ressentiment.

"It was evident that this was no mere transitory anger, no burst of evanescent fury. There was a depth of passion, of concentrated, earnest, implacable resentment, the more fearful as it was not violently demonstrative ; indeed there was hardly a gesture ; but, as she proceeded in those terrific anathemas, the impression on the hearers was that made by the approaching storm—at first low and distant, but coming nearer and nearer at every fearful peal, and finally bursting over their heads, scattering ruin and destruction. Each of the astonished judges looked at his neighbor's face to read his thoughts. The wisest deemed the thing accidental, a freak of chance. None there saw the signs of a revolution ; but all agreed to give the girl the solicited permission to play three times on the stage of the *Théâtre-Français*."

Note 16—RISTORI—page 13.

ADELAIDE RISTORI, Countess of Grillo, was born in 1821 of poor Italian strolling players, who made her take part in a play before she was three months old ! At 15 she entered a Sardinian troupe where Marchioni, a celebrated tragic actress, took a great liking to her and gave her most valuable instructions. Her forte seemed to lie in comedy, at which she soon acquired considerable reputation. Her marriage with the Marquis de Grillo, in 1847, interrupted her dramatic career for a few years, but the extraordinary success which she obtained one evening when performing for some charitable purpose overcame all family scruples and drove her back to the stage. War troubles again interfered with her success, but from 1850 to 1855 she was hailed through all parts of the Italian peninsula as the first Italian tragic actress of the day. In the summer of 1855, she made her appearance in Paris, when Rachel was at the summit of her glory. But even among strangers unacquainted with her language her great genius was acknowledged and from the very first night her reception was most enthusiastic. The French



government made her the most brilliant offers to attach her to the *Théâtre-Français*, but she preferred to remain always Italian.\* In every capital in Europe, Constantinople not excepted, she met the same success. In 1866-7, she visited America, North and South, with a splendid company; everywhere her appearance was an ovation. In 1875 she again visited the United States, playing her best pieces *Marie Antoinette*, *Queen Elizabeth*, *Mary Stuart*, *Pia de Tolomei*, and among the others the *Medea* originally written by our author for Rachel, but which she had so persistently refused to play. Ristori's powerful and varied talents are of an order altogether different from Rachel's. She was just as remarkable for expansion, brightness and vivacity as the French actress for concentration, gloominess and deep volcanic emotion. Ristori never had any trouble in passing the same evening from tragedy to comedy, from the most harrowing drama to the most comical farce. In short, to use the words of a writer in the *Atlantic Monthly*, "in according to Ristori the highest order of dramatic genius, we merely allow what has been decided beyond appeal by the critical tribunals of France, Italy, England, Germany and Spain. What Shakespeare is among dramatists, Ristori is among actors."

Note 17 — COLLÈGE DE FRANCE — page 20.

THE COLLEGE OF FRANCE, a famous educational establishment in Paris, was founded in 1530 by Francis I., with the title of Royal College, its professors being styled Royal Pleders. It has at present thirty professors who deliver courses, open to the public, six months every year, on languages, literature, moral philosophy, science, and law, supplementary courses being occasionally introduced. It is generally considered rather ornamental than practical as it holds no examinations and confers no degrees.

Note 18 — GIRARDIN — page 22.

SAINT-MARC GIRARDIN (1801-1873), member of the French Academy, also an eminent *litterateur* and professor. His lectures on poetry at the Sorbonne, delivered almost uninterrupt-

edly for nearly 35 years (1834-1869), were extremely popular, thanks to his good sense, clearness, moderation, humor, but particularly to his extended range of acquirements, the literatures of all the most prominent languages being a subject on which his knowledge was broad and profound. No lecturer ever enjoyed steadier popularity, the vast amphitheatre of the Sorbonne, capable of seating several thousand auditors, being always crowded whenever he spoke.

Note 19 — SEVIGNÉ — page 22.

MARIE DE RABUTIN-CHANTAL (1626-1696), Marchioness de Sevigné, so celebrated for her famous *Letters*, when only five years old lost both her parents, but she received a most careful education through the care of her uncle, the Abbé de Coulanges, who seems to have discharged the duties at once of thoughtful father and affectionate mother towards his orphan niece. Besides the ordinary branches of a young lady's education, she was well acquainted with Latin, Italian and Spanish. The sudden death of her husband, the Marquis de Sevigné, a worthless spendthrift, left her a widow at the age of twenty-five with two children, a son and a daughter. Her wit, beauty, vivacity, sweet and kindly nature, together with a handsome fortune, brought her the most brilliant offers of marriage, but she steadily refused them all, devoting the best years of her life to the education of her children, of her daughter in particular whom she loved to distraction and who indeed was in every way worthy of such fervent affection. She received the best society in France and was on the most intimate terms with Mesdames de Longueville and de Chevreuse.

Marriage at last carried off the "infinitely dear daughter" to a distant part of France, and it is to the poor mother's desire to alleviate the pangs of separation by an active correspondence that the world is indebted for those famous *Letters*, looked on to-day as among the most precious monuments of French literature and probably the most highly finished models in any language of perfect epistolary style.

To the seventieth year of her age she had hardly known what

sickness was, but after nursing her daughter successfully through a violent attack of small-pox, she caught that virulent disease herself, and died blessing God that the mother was taken away rather than the child.

Note 20 — MONTAIGNE — page 22.

MICHEL EYQUEM DE MONTAIGNE (1533-1592), author of the famous *Essays*, received a somewhat unusual education in consequence of his father's peculiar notions on the subject. "He desired me his son to relish science and duty of my own free will and pleasure, and to educate my soul in all liberty and delight, without any severity or constraint. . . . For fear of disturbing my brain by waking me suddenly in the morning, he caused me to be waked by the sound of some musical instrument, and I was never unprovided of a musician for that purpose." He was taught Latin by being surrounded from his infancy by teachers who allowed him to be spoken to only in that language. The result certainly was that when seven years of age he knew Latin so well that even great professors were afraid to speak to him. His only story-books were Ovid, Virgil, Livy, Terence, Plautus and Sallust, so that as far as literature was concerned he had received the education of a young Roman. But even genius requires labor to solidify it. He had never learned the great art of earnest application. What is got without difficulty is hard to retain. At twenty he had lost his facility in Latin, and Greek he could never learn. His writing was so bad that he was often unable to decipher it himself. He could never learn to swim, or fence, or even saddle a horse; he could never keep his accounts and would never look at a book unless when he was completely tired of doing nothing. In other words he never had a proper conception of *duty*, and though naturally of a most kind and generous heart he became in the end a mere literary epicure. "Laziness," he says, "and a love of liberty have been always my predominant qualities." Yet his *Essays*, written in his many leisure moments, without order or plan, or indeed any apparent object at all beyond his own simple amusement, possess a charming naturalness and

facility of style combined with an originality, a large-mindedness, and a profound knowledge of human nature, which no writer before or since has ever surpassed. They have been frequently translated into every European language, and will always possess a strong hold on mankind, for, though the apparent subject of the book is the author himself, every reader can see that the real theme is the all-absorbing one, *how to live well and how to die well*.

"This imperishable monument at once of the soundest reason and the happiest genius" says Villemain, "was nothing more to Montaigne than a pleasant amusement, a mere pastime for his fancy and his pen. His inspirations, crystallized forever by his style, will be just as highly cherished by future ages as they are to-day. What was his secret? His writings are himself! He is perhaps the only writer in whom the author is never separated from the man, so that he himself will prove just as immortal as his genius." He travelled through France, Germany and Italy, less with a tourist's than a philosopher's eye as appears from his own *Journal*, a curious document which was not discovered until nearly two hundred years after his death. Though he lived in very troublesome times he was highly respected by all parties; elected mayor of Bordeaux for several years, he discharged his duties with so much prudence, firmness and moderation that he saved his city from many of the horrors experienced elsewhere, the consequence of the furious religious wars at that time desolating France.

He died of a quinsy, which brought on a paralysis of the tongue, so that he remained three days with all his senses about him, but unable to utter a word. His death, as related by an eye-witness, is very touching. Feeling the approach of death, he got out of bed and, putting on his dressing-gown, wrote word that all his servants and others to whom he had left legacies should be summoned to his room; he then paid them the sums he had respectively bequeathed them, foreseeing the difficulty they might have in obtaining the amount from his heirs. Getting worse and worse, he requested his wife, in writing, to send for some gentlemen, his neighbors; and when they were as-



sembled, he caused mass to be said in his chamber. At the moment of the elevation, he attempted to rise but could not; with his hands crossed he fell back fainting, and in this act of devotion expired, September 13, 1592, in the sixtieth year of his age, presenting in his death, says Pasquier, a fine mirror of his soul. His tomb is still to be seen in a perfect state of preservation in the College Chapel, Bordeaux.

Note 21 — SORBONNE — page 23.

SORBONNE, a famous educational establishment in Paris, founded in 1250, and so called from its founder Robert de Sorbon, a learned priest, who intended it as the residence of certain secular ecclesiastics. Here, living in common and provided with every necessity of life, they could devote themselves to study and gratuitous instruction. For four hundred years the Sorbonne enjoyed a European reputation and deserved the name of the *Permanent Council of the Gauls*. In 1789, it shared the fate of the other ecclesiastical establishments, but in 1808 the buildings were given over to the University by Napoleon. Since 1821 the Sorbonne may be called the Parisian seat of the University, where free courses are taught by the most eminent Professors in Letters, Sciences, and Theology.

Note 22 — FRENCH ACADEMY — page 24.

In 1630, Conrart, a literary and scientific gentleman of Paris, took much pleasure in inviting to his house a little group of friends of similar tastes as his own, for the purpose of discussing congenial subjects together. One of them, the Abbé de Bois-robert, happening to describe some of these meetings to Cardinal Richelieu, the great minister instantly perceived what good services might be rendered to French literature by the voluntary labor of such enlightened minds, and immediately offered the society his powerful protection. Its constitution, drawn up in 1634, Richelieu strongly recommended to the King; and in 1635, the FRENCH ACADEMY, incorporated by letters-patent, held its regular sessions three times a week in the Louvre, its list of forty names, the limited number, being soon



filled. The chief great work of this illustrious body has been a *Dictionary of the French language*, the first edition, however, taking no less than nearly sixty years to complete, a slowness of proceeding which the wits of the period did not fail to remark. The second edition appeared in 1717, the third in 1740, the fourth in 1762, the fifth in 1798, the sixth in 1835, and the last has just appeared (1878), edited by Sylvestre de Sacy. This Dictionary is the grand and final authority of the day on the authenticity of French words and the niceties of the French language.

The Academy has rendered another important service to French literature by rewarding and in a measure directing and guiding the efforts of those writers whom it thinks proper to recommend strongly to public opinion. Balzac, a writer of the 17th century, first started the idea of crowning the best literary work by founding a prize for *religious eloquence*. Pellison created a biennial prize for *poetry*; others followed the good example, but the Baron de MONTYON has been the most generous of all the benefactors of the Academy by leaving it the interest of \$120,000 forever, to be divided equally between the author of the work *whose influence would most promote the welfare of society*, and the *poor Frenchman who had most distinguished himself by some act of virtue*. These two are always the most popular of the prizes distributed every year in the Institute Building at the annual session of the Academy in August. The other prizes are about sixteen in number, including the subjects: *eloquence, virtue, devotion, heroism, courage, history, literature, education, translation from the Latin, historical investigation*, and works on *morality, philology, the condition of woman*, etc.

Its members are elected by secret ballot, and receive no pay, the honor of being a French Academician being justly esteemed one of the highest this world can bestow. The beneficial influence of this learned body on French literature is undeniably great, and many of the most illustrious names of France are found on its roll, but bitter tongues have often said that the history of the 41st *Armchair* would easily eclipse that of many a one of the immortal 40. No doubt many great names in French liter-

ature are uninscribed in its books; to mention only a few: Des Cartes, Pascal, Molière, Regnard, Beaumarchais, Paul Louis Courier, Balzac (H. de), Béranger, and Michelet, have not been members of the French Academy.

As a matter of curiosity, we here give the 40 names on the list of 1877, with the date of their election:

|                                  |                                  |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. THIERS, ... .. 1833           | 21. CHAMPAGNY, ... .. 1869       |
| 2. MIGNET, ... .. 1836           | 22. BARBIER, ... .. 1869         |
| 3. V. HUGO, ... .. 1841          | 23. OLLIVIER, ... .. 1870        |
| 4. NOAILLES, ... .. 1849         | 24. MARMIER, ... .. 1870         |
| 5. DESIRÉ NISARD, ... .. 1850    | 25. DAUVERGIER DE HAURANNE, 1870 |
| 6. DUPANLOUP, ... .. 1854        | 26. DUC D'AUMALE, ... .. 1871    |
| 7. DE SACY, ... .. 1854          | 27. LITTRÉ, ... .. 1871          |
| 8. LEGOUVÉ, ... .. 1855          | 28. ROUSSET, ... .. 1871         |
| 9. FALLOUX, ... .. 1856          | 29. LOMÉNIE, ... .. 1871         |
| 10. AUGIER, ... .. 1857          | 30. ST. RENÉ TAILLANDIER, 1873   |
| 11. LAPRADE, ... .. 1858         | 31. VIEL CASTEL, ... .. 1873     |
| 12. SANDEAU, ... .. 1858         | 32. MÉZIÈRES, ... .. 1874        |
| 13. DUC DE BROGLIE, ... .. 1862  | 33. A. DUMAS FILS, ... .. 1874   |
| 14. FEUILLET, ... .. 1862        | 34. CARO, ... .. 1874            |
| 15. DUFAYRE, ... .. 1863         | 35. LEMOINNE, ... .. 1875        |
| 16. CUVILLIER FEURY, ... .. 1866 | 36. J. B. DUMAS, ... .. 1875     |
| 17. JULES FAVRE, ... .. 1867     | 37. JULES SIMON, ... .. 1875     |
| 18. AUTRAN, ... .. 1868          | 38. C. BLANC, ... .. 1876        |
| 19. C. BERNARD, ... .. 1868      | 39. BOISSIER, ... .. 1876        |
| 20. HAUSSONVILLE, ... .. 1869    | 40. V. SARDOU, ... .. 1877       |

CAMILLE DOUCET (1865), Perpetual Secretary.

Suppressed in 1793, the Academy was revived in 1795 in a new form by the Directory. In 1803, Napoleon united all the Academies together under a new organization, calling them the *Institut Impérial de France*; at the Restoration Louis XVIII. retained the name *Institut de France*, but revived the old title of *Academy* for the different bodies composing the institute. These are to-day: The French Academy, The Academy of Literature, The Academy of Science, The Academy of Fine Arts, and the Academy of the Moral and Social Sciences.

Note 23 — SANDEAU — page 25.

L. S. JULES SANDEAU (1810 —), novelist, dramatic author, member of the French Academy, and at present director of the

Mazarin Library, is a writer of the restrained and tempered kind who, while giving full swing to the representation of individual character and strong passion, never forgets the great importance of an elegant and correct style. He shows an exquisite taste in uniting the pleasing with the sentimental and can be pathetic as often as he pleases without ever ceasing to be natural. Most of his novels are excellent, especially *Mademoiselle de la Seiglière* (which he has also turned into a brilliant five-act drama), *Sacs et Parchemins*, and *La Maison de Pénarvan*. In conjunction with Augier he has composed the famous *Gendre de M. Poirier*, also *La Pierre de touche* and *La Ceinture Dorée*.

Note 24 — **DOUCET** — page 25.

C. CAMILLE DOUCET (1812 —), dramatic author, dramatic critic of the *Moniteur Parisien*, director of the national theatres, and member of the French Academy, has written many comedies, mostly in verse, which have been represented with much success at the *Théâtre-Français*. He treats his subjects with skill and expresses his ideas with ease and elegance. He is at present (1879) the perpetual secretary of the French Academy.

Note 25 — **VIENNET** — page 26.

J. PONS G. VIENNET (1777-1868), soldier of the Revolution, poet, man of letters, politician, Deputy, Peer of France, and member of the French Academy, lived through ten revolutions, but believed only in the first. During his long and troubled life he made many speeches, read many discourses, and wrote an immense number of books; in spite of his great literary industry, however, his productions were far more remarkable for their quantity than their quality. His dramatic works, in which he took great pride, never had the slightest success. A violent and headstrong partisan by nature, and looking at everything with his own angry eyes, he often did more harm to his friends than his enemies. In 1834 he was especially unpopular. "500 epigrams a year are launched," he says himself, "at my figure, my face, my poetry, my speeches, my rebellious topknot, and my green overcoat. I am the first butt every jackanapes just

out of college tries his hand at ; it is to me he considers it his bounden duty to give the first kick." His elevation to the peerage in 1840 by Louis Philippe, far from putting an end to these attacks, only redoubled their violence. His able and persistent efforts, however, against what has been called the Romantic school of literature, opened the doors of the French Academy to him in 1830, as successor to the Count de Ségur.

Note 26 — BERSOT — page 28. .

P. ERNEST BERSOT (1816 —), graduate of the Normal School, private secretary to Minister Cousin in 1840, was appointed professor of philosophy at Bordeaux in 1841. Here his 'liberalism' embroiled him with the clergy and led to his removal. In 1845 he was appointed professor at Versailles, but this position he also lost in 1852 by refusing to take the oath to the new Constitution, and for several years he devoted himself to private teaching and to critical, philosophical and educational studies. In 1859 he began to write for the *Journal des Débats*, and in 1866 he succeeded De Beaumont as member of The Academy of Moral and Social Sciences. His writings are of the "liberal" school and decidedly Voltairian. His chief works are *Mesmer and Animal Magnetism*, *Free Philosophy*, *Literature and Morals*, and several political pamphlets. He is at present the Director of the Normal School.

Note 27 — MOLÉ — page 31.

FRANÇOIS RENÉ MOLÉ (1734-1802), a celebrated comic actor, and member of the Institute. His successful impersonations were innumerable, his exquisites and old beaux being simply perfection. No greater favorite perhaps appeared on the Parisian stage. In 1766 his detention from the theatre by a slight cold was considered a public calamity. Bulletins regarding the state of his health were read every night in the theatres, and every morning a long string of carriages blockaded his door. His physician recommending some generous wine for his convalescence, more than two thousand bottles were sent to his house in one day by people of the first quality. It was on the



pompous and dignified Molé that the wits of the day fathered the well-known story of the blank manuscript. An author gave him for examination as the manuscript of a play what was really nothing but a roll of blank sheets. In a few weeks Molé returned it with a polite note saying the play was really pretty good but a trifle too long! It was also of Molé that a young actress said: "He is sixty-five at least, but I don't know any young actor who can fling himself at a lady's feet so gracefully." In 1795 he was appointed professor of elocution and dramatic art at the Institute, where he formed several pupils who afterwards rose to great distinction.

Note 28 — **BERRYER** — page 31.

**PIERRE ANTOINE BERRYER** (1790-1868), celebrated orator, first lawyer of the Parisian bar, chief of the Bourbon or legitimist party, brilliant political lecturer, member of the French Academy and for many years one of the foremost members of the Chamber of Deputies, was one of the most illustrious Frenchmen of the present century. Educated by the Oratorians in their college of Juilly, which has produced so many eminent men, young Berryer's inclinations favored the church, but his father wished him to follow his own profession, that of lawyer. Always the friend of good order and legitimate authority, he never hesitated to employ his powerful talents in behalf of the erring when he thought them unfairly assailed or treated too severely. He had the courage to defend, though in vain, Marshal Ney in 1815, and succeeded in procuring the acquittal of Cambronne. In 1826 he pleaded for Lamennais, in 1833 for Châteaubriand, in 1840 for Louis Napoleon, in 1858 for Montémbert, and in 1861 sustained the Baltimore Bonapartes in their claims to be considered the legitimate successors to Jerome Bonaparte. In 1830 he was elected to the Chamber of Deputies, and there, for more than thirty years, his voice, boldly pronouncing for what he considered justice in every social, political or financial question, made him by himself a great power admired and respected by all parties alike. He ably advocated the cause of the Union in our Civil War, denounced the Mex-



ican Invasion, and helped to preserve France from any such burden as the Alabama claims. An uncompromising legitimist, he had when a young man been the first to hoist the white flag at Rennes in 1814 and proclaim the deposition of the first Napoleon. At the *Coup d'Etat* in 1852 when sixty-one years of age he just as boldly denounced Louis Napoleon and proclaimed *his* deposition. When elected to the Academy in 1854, he took his seat but refused to pay the customary visit to the Head of the State; and, faithful to the last, a few days before his death, he wrote a letter to the Count de Chambord, addressing him as *Monseigneur mon roi* (my lord and my king). His funeral was celebrated with unusual pomp and solemnity, even the French Academy, breaking their stringent rule never to leave Paris on such occasions, taking a very prominent part in the affecting ceremony. A subscription started to erect a monument to his memory rose in a few days to \$20,000.

Cormenin in his *Orateurs* says of Berryer: "What renders his eloquence so effective in particular is that from the first start he never loses sight of his objective point. He makes no brisk attack on his enemy; he begins by tracing certain lines of circumvallation around him; then dislodging him from point to point, throwing him off his guard by masterly movements, and always advancing, he at last suddenly seizes him, envelops him in the meshes of his argumentation, and chokes, smothers, and strangles him in its terrible iron coils. This mode of attack can of course be attempted only by experienced hands; it would soon fatigue an audience so incapable of protracted attention as a French chamber; but it is powerfully sustained and in fact rendered invincible by Berryer's majestic presence, his thrilling voice, his animated gestures, and the commanding elegance of his language."

Note 29 — TALMA — page 32.

FRANÇOIS JOSEPH TALMA (1763-1826), the first tragedian of his day and the regenerator of dramatic art, of Arabian origin the son of a Parisian dentist, received his education partly in Paris and partly in London. He practised dentistry himself for

a year or two, when he renounced it for the stage. Making his *début* at the *Théâtre-Français* in 1787, he was admitted associate in 1789, when he at once began the reformation of stage costume by endeavoring to make his own at least somewhat suitable to time and place. Appearing one evening at rehearsal dressed in a Roman toga instead of the ordinary silk coat, lace ruffles, dress sword, powdered wig, and cocked hat in which classic characters were played at the time, he excited at once the amazement and the ridicule of the company. "Talma," exclaimed Mademoiselle Contat, the famous actress, with her merriest laugh, "you look for all the world like an antique statue!" "He has a bed-sheet on his shoulders!" cried Madame Vestris. Such criticisms, as may be well supposed, had little effect on his determination; he persisted in making correctness of costume one of his most rigorous necessities, till by degrees the sensible innovation was at last universally adopted. So particular was he indeed regarding telling points in costumes that, having heard that some Florentine painter had given Nero a kind of red cravat which wonderfully contributed to redouble the ferocity of the Roman Emperor's facial expression, he adopted the idea himself and produced an extraordinary effect. During the empire he often acted before royal audiences in Paris and elsewhere; even in London he had performed with great applause in his younger days, when he spoke English to perfection and was as well acquainted with Shakespeare as with Corneille. Napoleon, to whom he had once lent money when a young man, always showed him great friendship, loving to converse with him and often taking *pose* lessons from the accomplished master. He even paid his debts once or twice, for Talma, in spite of his immense theatrical income, was always kept poor by an unfortunate mania that possessed him for building, and then tearing down the same house to build it over again. The Restoration did not injure his popularity, the Bourbons liking him as well as the Bonapartes, though in his part of *Sylla* in Jouy's play of that name he produced an entrancing effect by his wonderful resemblance to the great emperor. Improving with age, some of his later characters are among his best.

When sixty he played to Mademoiselle Mars in the comedy of *L'Ecole des Vicillards* with all the fire of his youth and more of its finish ; but his best creation was his last of all, *Charles VI.*, in the tragedy of that name, played in 1826, the very year of his death. He is said to have created upwards of seventy characters. His excellence lay in his great earnestness and the wonderful naturalness of his intensest passion. His friends claimed for him the sublimity of Lekain, the majesty of Larive, and the pathos of Monvel.

Note 30 — PARSEVAL-GRANDMAISON — page 32.

FRANÇOIS A. PARSEVAL DE GRANDMAISON (1759-1834), a poet, and member of the French Academy. In 1798 he followed Bonaparte to Egypt as poet of the expedition, in place of Lemercier, who had declined the perilous honor. His principal works, *Verses on Napoleon's Marriage*, *On the Birth of the King of Rome*, *Philip Augustus*, an epic poem in 12 books, etc., are now nearly all forgotten.

Note 31 — DUPREZ — page 34.

G. L. DUPREZ (1806 —), famous singer, born at Paris, entered the *Conservatoire* when only ten years old, studied afterwards in Italy, where, in course of time, he played in the chief operas of the day with great success. From 1837 to 1849 he sang regularly at the Grand Opera in Paris, his best and most highly successful rôle being *Arnold* in *William Tell*. A fine tenor voice rather well managed than powerful, great taste, and careful acting, were the chief qualities that recommended Duprez to the public, and brought him an income of \$20,000 a year. He was professor at the *Conservatoire* from 1842 to 1850, and afterwards spent some years travelling over the world with a lyrical troupe. His operas, of which he composed several, have all failed to attract public attention.

Note 32 — MALIBRAN — page 34.

MARIA FELICITA GARCIA (1808-1836), one of the first singers of the present century, born in Paris, daughter of Manuel Garcia,

the famous singer, singing-master, and the composer of *The Caliph of Bagdad*, etc., made her *début* at the Italian Opera in London (1825) with the most signal success. Her father removing to New York during the same year, she initiated with great *éclat* the first Italian Opera ever given in the United States. In 1826 she married a French merchant of New York, reputed to be very wealthy, but who failed in business within less than a year. Indignant at the idea that her husband should think of retrieving his fortunes by her professional labors, she surrendered at once to his creditors the dower he had settled upon her, and returned without him to Europe. Her reappearance on the stage was a perfect ovation. Whether at Paris, London, Milan, Venice, or Vienna, she was always received with unbounded enthusiasm. In March, 1836, the French courts having mean time annulled her marriage with Malibran, on account of some informality, she married De Bériot, the celebrated Belgian violinist and composer. Less than a month afterwards, she was severely injured by a fall from her horse; but neglecting to attend to the case properly, and even singing at the Manchester festival against her physician's orders, she was attacked in September by a nervous fever which carried her off in a few days. Her sudden death was universally regretted, few actresses leaving more sincere or more numerous friends. Her generosity, amiability, and conversational powers were fully on a par with her professional abilities, which were extraordinary. She could sing soprano or contralto with equal ease and wonderful richness and efficiency, and her dramatic were fully as great as her lyrical qualities. Her high order of genius, and the peculiarity of her voice, trained to perfection by her father's skilful patience, permitted her to attempt with perfect success the most varied rôles, tragic or comic, in the finest operas of the time.

Note 33 — STOCKHAUSEN — page 39.

JULES STOCKHAUSEN (1826 —), son of a harpist and composer, was born in Paris. Possessing a good barytone voice, and a happy musical organization, he cultivated both assiduously at the *Conservatoire*, and afterwards took lessons from Manuel



Garcia. Though an excellent singer, he has not succeeded well in opera, being rather deficient in dramatic ability, but he is quite at home in musical festivals, concerts, etc.; and he has been for a long time orchestra leader of the Hamburg Theatre.

Note 34 — RUBINI — page 39.

J. GIOVANNI BATTISTA RUBINI (1795–1854), one of the first tenors of the nineteenth century, though not remarkable as an actor, sang in all the capitals of Europe with great success, and at fifty retired with a princely fortune. His voice, remarkably sweet, was unrivalled in expressing tenderness and sorrow, and had the unusual compass of two octaves and two notes.

Note 35 — DIDEROT — page 39.

DENIS DIDEROT (1712–1784), the notorious encyclopædist, began life in Paris as a teacher and translator. His first original work, *Philosophic Thoughts*, attacked every religion without exception, and attempted to sap the foundation of all morality by openly preaching atheism, and pretending to prove that creation was all a mere work of chance. In spite of his absurdities and contradictions, and of the terrible consequences to which such writings should evidently lead, he wrote with such fire, wit, and power, that his work created a great sensation all over Europe, and lifted him at once into a high position in the "philosophic" world. In 1751, in conjunction with D'Alembert, he started the *Encyclopédie*, of which vast enterprise of incredulity he was really the soul, the heart, and the head. In spite of all his efforts, however, the *Encyclopédie* was an immense Babel. He calls it himself a "Gulf into which rag-pickers of all kinds flung at random an infinity of things badly observed, badly digested, the good, the bad, and the doubtful, always incoherent and often contradictory." And elsewhere, "We employed on it a detestable race of writers who, knowing nothing whatever and pluming themselves on knowing all things, endeavored to distinguish themselves by a desperate universality, attacking everything, confounding everything, and actually spoiling everything." In spite of his ardent zeal, resolution, and great literary



abilities, his irregular and dissipated habits made him so poor that he was obliged to sell his library. Catherine of Russia bought it for \$10,000, and not only left him the use of it for life, but allowed him 1000 francs for taking care of it, paying him fifty years' salary in advance. In her great admiration for the infidel philosopher, she even invited him to St. Petersburg, where her half-barbarous, half-luxurious court gave him a brilliant reception. It was the fashion of the time to idolize everything French, and though his ideas were dissolving every fibre of European civilization, it was confidently thought that they were powerless towards injuring the inorganic colossus of the North. "I talked much, and frequently, with Diderot," writes Catherine, "but with more curiosity than profit." "The people of St. Petersburg," writes Frederick the Great, "find him tiresome and disputatious, talking the same rigmarole over and over again." Diderot, however, was immensely pleased at his reception; "this great empress," he cries in his ecstasy, "unites the beauty of Cleopatra to the soul of a Julius Cæsar."

On his return to Paris, though now old and infirm, he became the centre of the club of *Esprits-Forts* (free-thinkers) who met regularly at Baron d'Holbach's, and whose influence on the French nation so strongly contributed to bring about the horrors of a Revolution which they did not live long enough to witness. Diderot's works are too numerous even to name: philosophy, romance, the drama (*Père de famille* being his masterpiece), fine arts criticism, literary criticism, etc., there was nothing too high or too difficult for his daring genius. They made a great noise in their day, but at present they are nearly all forgotten, the last edition having appeared fifty-eight years ago. In private life he is said to have been good-natured, generous, charitable even, but his name is to be held in eternal infamy as the apostle of atheism and corruption, and the preacher of the most destructive doctrines. He is said to have been so excessively vain and egotistical that on his journey from St. Petersburg he usually travelled in a dressing-gown and night-cap. "Who is that?" asked the people who could not help noticing him. "That's the celebrated M. Diderot," was his footman's

ready reply. Like most talkers of fluency and eloquence, he generally contrived to keep all the conversation to himself—a decided inconvenience when some other member of the company wished to shine. Voltaire could not bear him: “He’s a capital hand at monologue,” said he, “but at dialogue he is profoundly ignorant.”

Note 36—**DORIVAL**—page 39.

This actor died in the French Colonies whither he had gone for the benefit of his health (1792). Though little favored by nature, his voice being heavy and disagreeable, and his figure small and far from imposing, his warmth, honesty, intelligence and general dramatic talents were great enough to recommend him to general favor. He performed at the *Théâtre-Français*; *Polyeuctes* and *Orosmanes* were his most successful impersonations.

Note 37—**VOLTAIRE**—page 40.

FRANÇOIS MARIE AROUET (1694-1778), the most universal writer of any age or country, was born, of highly respectable parents in Paris, where he studied for seven years with brilliant success in the college of Louis-le-Grand, at that time directed by the Jesuits and frequented by the highest nobility. His father wished him to follow his own profession, that of notary and government accountant, but an irresistible propensity disgusted young Arouet with plodding, steady work and attracted him to literature, chiefly poetry. To the malign influence exercised on his early years by his godfather, a certain Abbé de Châteauneuf who, though nominally a priest, was really a refined voluptuary, most of the failings of this man may be safely attributed. The very first book in which he had learned to read, a poem of Rousseau’s representing Moses as an impostor, had been put into the child’s hands by this most godless of godfathers. No wonder that one of his Jesuit teachers, while admiring the wit, learning and industry of his pupil, uttered the easy prophecy: “You will one day become the head-centre (*coryphée*) of deism.” At the age of seventeen he left school, knowing Latin pretty well, very little Greek, but already manifesting a decided liter-

ary ability. He says himself: "I could not tell if Francis I. had ever been made prisoner, nor where in the world Pavia lay; I knew nothing whatever of the laws or the interests of France; I knew not one word of mathematics, not one word of sound philosophy; I knew Latin, and could rhyme nonsense." But he always spoke of Father Porée, his rhetoric teacher, with much warmth: "No one," he says, "could make virtue or learning more delightful. His lessons were hours of real enjoyment." In the college register the following words are said to have been found after young Arouet's name: "*Puer ingeniosus, sed insignis nebulo*," (a youth of parts but an unmitigated scamp.)

It was rather early for him to leave school, but his godfather soon gave his education the finishing touch by introducing him to a witty and brilliant but profligate set of young nobles calling themselves *La Société du Temple*, where his sprightliness, good humor and particularly his talent for poetry and unsparing epigram soon made him a great favorite. His father's alarm at the consequences of such an immoral life banished him to Holland as secretary to the French ambassador, but an "entangling alliance" there of an amorous nature soon brought him into such danger that he was obliged to leave the country and return to Paris. Another unsuccessful attempt at studying law compelled his father to banish him again from the capital. Of all places on earth he liked Paris the best, but there his exceeding sensitiveness to ridicule and his wonderful propensity for getting into trouble never allowed him to stay for any great length of time. His place of banishment on this occasion, however, was no further off than a friend's house at Fontainebleau, where the intimate society of an old gentleman, who happened to be an enthusiastic admirer of Henry IV. and his times, had such an effect on the young poet that he immediately began the composition of the famous *Henriade*, the only work in the French language that pretends to be an epic poem.

His skill in stinging satire had by this time become so well known that he was instantly pointed out as the author of some of the severest lampoons to which the death of Louis XIV. (1715) had given rise. His satirical attempts at exculpation in

fact, irritated the Regent so much that he was confined in the Bastille for nearly a year, where, however, he made the best use of his time by writing out some of the cantos of the *Henriade* and finally revising and correcting his *Œdipe*, a tragedy commenced several years before. On his release he was presented to the Regent who, probably desirous to conciliate so dangerous an opponent, insisted on his accepting a gift of one thousand crowns. "Your Royal Highness is very good," was Arouet's dry reply, "for your care in providing my board too I must express my gratitude, but in future I hope your Royal Highness will not trouble itself so much about my lodgings." The first use he made of his liberty was to change his name to Voltaire, *Arouet* having a disagreeable and ominous sound in French ears. *Voltaire* is simply an anagram of *Arouet l. j.* (*le jeune*, the young), the *u* becoming *v*, and the *j* *i*, as is usual in such transformations.

The success of *Œdipe* at the *Théâtre-Français* restored the young poet once more to a high position in fashionable society and encouraged him to persevere in his literary efforts, though for the next five or six years (1718-1724) he produced nothing worth speaking of except sprightly epistles, stanzas, rondeaus, etc., directed to his numerous lady admirers, infinite in number and written with extraordinary ease. In 1725 we find him playing court-poet with considerable success, the young queen Maria Leczinska laughing over his comedy *L'Indiscret*, weeping over his tragedy *Mariamne*, calling him her "poor Voltaire" and allowing him a pension of 1500 *livres* (about \$400) a year out of her private purse. The young king (Louis XV.) had already conferred on him a yearly pension of about \$500. Being now in possession of a good fortune, his pensions and inheritance bringing him at least 10 thousand *livres* a year, enjoying considerable court influence, his sharp tongue in that age of frivolity securing him almost as many friends as enemies, he began to promise himself an unclouded future, when all at once he found himself in greater trouble than ever. The consequences having an important effect on his after life, the story deserves a little detail.

Conversing one evening with his usual vivacity in the midst



of a lively party in the actress Adrienne Lecouvreur's box at the *Théâtre-Français*, he is suddenly interrupted by the Chevalier de Rohan who happens to be present. "Who is this young fellow that talks so loud?" asks the Chevalier with his most aristocratic air. "The name of this young fellow," replies Voltaire with his usual readiness, "is nothing whatever to boast of, but, such as it is, he has done something to honor it." This was a severe shy at the Chevalier whose only claim to distinction, as everybody knew, lay in the fact of his being the Duke de Rohan-Chabot's son. The angry aristocrat raises his cane, but Lecouvreur's swoon puts a temporary end to the quarrel. A few days afterwards, Voltaire, dining at the Duke de Sully's, receives a note saying a gentleman down-stairs desires an interview. Descending to see who it is, he is instantly assailed at the doorstep by three servants armed with heavy canes, who give him a severe beating, the Chevalier crying out all the time from the house opposite, "don't strike him on the head!" The poor poet's remonstrances with court and friends are equally vain. "Served the insolent buffoon right!" cry the nobles. "The Chevalier was too kind!" cry his enemies. "Oh, Monsieur de Voltaire, it's really too bad!" cry his friends before his face, choking with laughter however when his back is turned. Even his own family ridicule the idea of a commoner demanding satisfaction of a nobleman. But the fiery commoner has no notion of pocketing the affront. For six weeks he practises night and day with a fencing-master, and then sends a challenge to the Chevalier. It is accepted, but next day, instead of an adversary, he meets a file of soldiers who once more lock him up in the Bastile. He is let out in a month, but unable to endure existence in a city where such a flagrant outrage can be permitted with impunity, he asks for his passports and starts for England (1726).

He passed three years in England, mostly in London or its neighborhood. There he made acquaintance with Pope, who, disgusted with his incredulity, left him suddenly one day and would not see him any more; with Swift, to whose *Gulliver's Travels* he was indebted for more than one of his cankerous



ideas; and particularly with Bolingbroke, the violent free thinker, who soon initiated him into the anti-christian writings of Woolston, Tindal, Collins, and Shaftesbury in particular, whom he pronounced to be the "boldest of English philosophers." In a word, his residence in England made him cooler, more persevering and rabider in his attacks on Christianity than any Frenchman had ever been before. There too he put the English into such good-humor by the flattering notice he had taken of Queen Elizabeth in the *Henriade*, now completely finished, that he had no difficulty in obtaining permission to dedicate it to Queen Caroline. Nay, publishing it by subscription in London, in spite of its foreign language and the charges of impiety instantly made against it, he had the satisfaction of seeing its sales amount in a short time to upwards of 40 thousand dollars.

This sum might be called the basis of his future fortune. Though not a miser, he was always keenly alive to every chance of making money. On his return to France he found that a lottery had been started in Paris to pay the debts of the city. Hearing from La Condamine the scientist that by buying up all the tickets it was impossible not to win, Voltaire instantly organized a company, the members of which soon had the pleasure of dividing among themselves at least a million francs. In fact, henceforward he had always some money speculation on hand; in spite of his incessant literary industry, he was continually investing in corn, bacon, pictures, or whatever else could turn an honest penny, with now and then a fat army contract secured by the influence of some friend at court; and so "shrewd was he in financial matters that, owing but little to his books, which, despite their immense popularity, were never a source of much profit, his yearly income at his death is said to have amounted to between 30 and 40 thousand dollars, an income in those times truly princely."

But even this great worldly fortune never interrupted his literary labors. His industry was unremitting to the last day of his life. Of even his chief works, however, we can hardly give the names. At this period, his principal productions were *The Life*

of *Charles XII. of Sweden* (1731), as a narrative a perfect masterpiece, but as a history pronounced inexact and weak by Napoleon, who examined it critically; and his fine tragedy, *Zaïre* (alluded to on page 40), a work replete with majesty and fire, and containing passages inspired by the purest Christian morality.

His enemies now began to show themselves disposed to leave him undisturbed, but his restless, carping, mocking spirit could not brook repose. His *Philosophical Letters*, composed in England, printed in Rouen, and now published for the first time, were read with avidity by many, but they excited a cry of horror and indignation among the orderly and conservative classes from one end of the country to the other. Even the heartless government, which could excuse everything but an attack on itself, appeared to be so shocked at this wanton and undisguised attempt to sap the very foundations of all Christian morality, that parliament ordered the book to be burned by the hangman, the printer to be put in the Bastille, and the author to be arrested. Voltaire sought safety in flight first to Switzerland, then to Belgium, and afterwards, when the storm had calmed down a little, to Lorraine, a country at that time not yet included in French territory (1734).

Here, in the house of a literary lady, a Madame du Châtelet, to whom he was not married, and whose society her husband, a man of merit, seems to have generally avoided, Voltaire spent fourteen years of as tolerable tranquillity as his restless spirit was able to endure. Most of the works produced in this unbecoming retreat were worthy of it in every way. The first, *La Pucelle*, a filthy and disgusting burlesque on JOAN OF ARC, the divine maid of Orleans, the eternal pride and glory of every noble French heart, would be enough by itself to condemn him to eternal infamy. Another, the *Life of Rousseau* was of a nature so utterly disgusting that he was afterwards heartily ashamed of it himself, repeatedly, but in vain, attempting to deny the paternity. To do Madame du Châtelet justice, it must be acknowledged that as long as she lived she kept this and all other works of the kind safe and secure under lock and key. Even in his purely scientific works, if anything can be called scien-

tific where the real object is neither science nor truth, such as on *Newton's Philosophy*, on *the Nature of Fire*, on *the Stars*, etc., his aim all through was to destroy the faith of mankind in a benevolent and superintending Providence.

In 1740 began his personal acquaintance with Frederick of Prussia, who, this year, ascended the throne. They had already carried on a very active correspondence, and the young monarch was so much pleased with a work of Voltaire's proving Prussia to have certain rights over a territory just then claimed by France that he invited him to the favor of a confidential interview. Voltaire considered himself highly honored by this attention from the "Solomon of the North," as he called him, and spent two or three very pleasant months in his company, finding the unscrupulous King even then quite busy in preparing the great blow for stealing the march on Austria, that is called in history the "Conquest of Silesia."

In 1742, his play of *Mahomet* gained some applause at the *Théâtre-Français*, and *Mérope*, following immediately, obtained such brilliant and universal success that his friends thought it an opportune moment to propose him for the seat in the Academy then vacant. To obtain this honor, one he had long so eagerly courted, he did not hesitate to write a public letter full of the strongest protestations of his devotion to Catholicity, but his enemies, too shrewd to be taken in by a *ruse* so transparent, not only rejected him by a large majority, but also stung him to the quick by electing in the course of the year four of his most bitter opponents.

Frederick II. had now become a great power in Europe. He had first made an unjustifiable war on a friendly princess, and then having gained his ends, he suddenly made peace, leaving his allies the French in the lurch. Having thus committed two great treasons, it was expected that his friend Voltaire would have no great trouble in inducing him to commit a third. The poet, delighted with the idea of suddenly becoming a great statesman, eagerly undertook the task. But he found his diplomacy, his proposals, and eloquent state papers to be all alike unheeded by the astute king: they were heard with a

smile and answered with a jest. "The Austrians will send overwhelming forces into Silesia!" cries Voltaire.

"And with joy we shall receive them, Rambo Bambo,  
And a jolly welcome give them, Rambo Bee!"

sings Frederick, quoting a well-known opera snatch.

In spite of his failure, on his return to Paris, he found court life so very enchanting that to perpetuate it he again turned court-sycophant, extolling the beauty and graces of the new favorite, the notorious Madame de Pompadour, in poems whose abject flattery was far from being redeemed even by their unquestioned wit. He was quite successful. A *ballet*, considered by himself no better than a penny farce, brought him more honors than his greatest masterpieces. He was made historiographer of France, and also nobleman of the bed-chamber with the right of selling the position, a privilege of which he availed himself as soon as possible by disposing of the office for 60 thousand *livres*. But this was not all. A new vacancy occurring in the Academy, he applied again for it, this time confident of success; still to make assurance doubly sure, he attempted as usual to conciliate the ecclesiastical party by public letters of the most unblushing hypocrisy. "I love and admire the Jesuits," he declares. "If a single page bearing my name can be pointed out as capable of scandalizing even a sacristan, that page I will tear out before his face. I want to live and die quietly in the bosom of the Church, Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman!" Pompadour's influence being irresistible, Voltaire was admitted to the Academy in May, 1746.

But court favor is notoriously of short duration. His poems of *Fontenoy* and his opera of the *Temple of Glory* were signal failures; in the latter piece he brought in so many temples that one wit called him the *Templar*, and another cried out there was only one more wanting, the *Temple d'l'Amour—propre!* The increasing success of Crébillon's tragedies completed the disgust of the exceedingly sensitive and jealous poet, and drove him once more back to Lorraine. But there he found things sadly changed. Madame du Châtelet received him very coldly,

in fact left him altogether for a more constant admirer. She was perhaps the only woman that had ever really cared for him, and her death, occurring shortly afterwards, rendered a longer stay in Lorraine unendurable. His new sojourn, in Paris he tried to render pleasant by erecting a private theatre for the representation of his own tragedies, himself performing the chief parts, assisted by his literary niece — Madame Denis, a widow of 39 who took charge of his household — and a young man named Lekain, who afterwards became a celebrated tragic actor. But displeased either at the indifference of his friends, or the cabals of his enemies, or the disfavor of Pompadour who found him too familiar, or the open dislike of the Queen and the Dauphin who regarded him as the enemy of religion, he determined at last to yield to Frederick's solicitations and exchange his residence in Paris for one at the court of Berlin. "I am still in Paris," he wrote to Frederick, "but my heart is in Berlin; it is indeed an altar on which I would sacrifice everything for the glory of you, my Jehovah." In 1750, at the age of 56, he left Paris, which he was never to see again till twenty-eight years later, when he returned there to die.

Received with delight, decorated with titles, lodged in the palace, provided with a pension of 4 thousand dollars a year for life, the dazzled poet readily believed himself in the country of liberty, philosophy and glory. At court, on the promenade, in the theatre nothing but Voltaire! the great Voltaire! The mornings were devoted to literary labors with the King whom he found "to possess at once the docility of a pupil and the genius of a rival." The evenings were passed in philosophical suppers, in company with such congenial spirits as Maupertuis, President of the Berlin Academy, as D'Argens, notorious for his attacks on Christianity, as D'Arnaud, a conceited, but indifferent poet, as La Mettrie, half-materialist, half-madman, all refugee Frenchmen, pensioned by Frederick, and kept expressly to amuse his leisure moments by their lively and blasphemous ridicule of everything held most sacred in the eyes of the rest of mankind. The rest of Voltaire's time was mostly spent in correcting his works, and finishing the *Age of Louis XIV.*



The honey-moon did not last long. First poor D'Arnaud had to go—one poet was enough for any household. Then the velvet paw of the amiable King would give even his illustrious friend a slight scratch unexpectedly. Correcting poetry began to pall. "I have to wash too much of his majesty's dirty linen," writes the poet to one of his friends in Paris. After a while his enthusiasm is still cooler. "The supper-parties are still delicious, the King is still the life of the company, but—I have still my opera, my comedy, my concert, my reviews, books, studies, but—Berlin is still fine, the princess charming, the maids of honor beautiful, but—but—but." Frederick too begins to show his disenchantment. Apropos of a quarrel between Voltaire and a Jewish pawnbroker about some money and diamonds, "the Frenchman," he writes, "will get out of it as usual by some trick, but his character will be more contemptible than ever." Some of Frederick's coarse jokes on the scandals of the court of Versailles circulating in Paris, Voltaire was suspected of treachery. The whole palace was in a ferment. Macaulay, with his usual exaggeration, makes the quarrel between the great King and the great poet more contemptible than it really was: Frederick, he says, gave orders to have his guest's sugar and chocolate curtailed, and Voltaire indemnified himself by pocketing the wax candles.

Things rapidly got worse and worse. Voltaire, quite as jealous of a scientist as of a poet, turned his "withering smile" on Maupertuis, and wrote an amusing squib, *Doctor Akakia*, laughing most unmercifully at the President's scientific pretensions. Frederick, extremely indignant, ordered Voltaire to suppress it. The poet promised to do so, but broke his word, and very soon all Berlin was making merry over unfortunate Maupertuis. The King, really furious, had the pamphlet burned by the hangman, and ordered his guest to make an apology. Voltaire, alarmed, tried as usual to escape by a lie, trumping up something about his faithless secretary or printer. But Frederick was no longer to be imposed on. "Your impudence," he writes, "confounds me. Though what you have done is as clear as day, you persist in denying your guilt. If you carry on this thing any farther,

I shall have the whole affair printed, so that the world may see that if your works have got you statues, your conduct should have got you chains." A longer residence in Berlin was now impossible. The whole quarrel was ridiculous enough, but its results troubled all Europe, and even America. The embitterment of the French court by Frederick's epigrams, the secret of which Voltaire did not conceal, threw France into an alliance with Austria, giving rise to the disastrous "Seven Years' War."

In 1753, the sworn friends parted forever, one anything but sorry, the other delighted at his escape. "May he never come back!" writes the King; "he is a good man to read but a dangerous fellow to know." Remembering, however, with terror that the "dangerous fellow" had in his possession a volume of his MS. poetry of which he would probably make a bad use, he suddenly orders the Prussian commander at Frankfort to arrest Voltaire at once, and to take away his key, cross and ribbon, and particularly all the letters and writings in the King's hand that might be found in his possession. Imagine the poet's indignation. Through a series of ridiculous blunders on the part of the Prussian official, aided very probably by Frederick's well-known love for coarse practical jokes, Voltaire had actually to endure thirty-six days' imprisonment before he was finally suffered to quit the "free city" of Frankfort. The Versailles court being deeply offended at his residence in the capital of France's bitterest foe, Paris was not to be thought of as a residence; he took refuge accordingly in Switzerland, near Geneva, having houses in two different cantons, the better to escape in case of danger.

Here, at last, free from every tie, possessing an ample fortune, safe from king or church, caring little any longer for either, and in the sixtieth year of his age, he threw off all restraint, and devoted the rest of his life to the set task of destroying Christianity. He issues the motto: "*Let us crush the infamous thing!*" He is the absolute and unquestioned king of the infidels and deists throughout Europe. The *Encyclopédie* just beginning to appear at this time, Voltaire hailed it with delight as the great battering-ram by which the "philosophers" were

to attack and utterly demolish all religion, and actually wrote eleven articles for one volume. The publication of *La Pucelle*, however, displeased even the Swiss themselves, Protestants as well as Catholics. Rousseau himself was so shocked at the cynicism and impiety of another of Voltaire's works as to write an indignant reply to it, characterizing the author as a *heart of depravity whose memory France would have every reason to curse and detest*. But Voltaire discharged at Rousseau one of his characteristic shafts, and then turning on the Genevese Protestants, he attacked them with as much ridicule and venom as he had ever heaped upon the Jesuits. To put himself out of danger from their possible violence, he removed to a château in the neighborhood, called Ferney, on French territory, which he judged to be safer as the new minister of France was his friend. To vex them still further, he started a watch factory, which for a long time afterwards proved a serious rival to Geneva. He even erected a church still existing, inscribing on it *Deo erexit Voltaire*, though, unable to find a clergyman, he had to preach in it himself. Meantime he worked away with astounding industry. Pamphlet followed pamphlet incessantly, all breathing the same implacable hostility to Christianity. Most of them were without his name, but nobody mistook the author, though as usual he never hesitated to disavow them, even occasionally by a solemn oath. Ferney became the Mecca of the new Mahomet, which every "philosopher" piously visited once in his lifetime.

What was his object in all this furious zeal for destruction? Liberty of the masses? No; he has himself characterized the people as "*a herd of oxen* in need of nothing but a yoke, some hay and a whip; *low rabble*, a mob made to be guided but unworthy *to be instructed*." He has no mercy on their sufferings. When the poor Poles cry out in agony against the despotic Catherine who wants to rule their souls as well as their bodies, he tells them "to keep still; the Russian can fire better than you; don't compel your protectors to destroy you; they come into Poland to establish toleration, but on hostile intolerants they will have no mercy." This same Catherine he does not

hesitate to glorify, even while she is still reeking with her husband's blood, writing for her his *History of Russia*, dedicating to her his *History of Philosophy*, applauding her victories in Poland; saluting her as the "Semiramis of the North" and crying out, "it is from the north that light comes for us to-day!"

Did this man do no good? Unquestionably he did some good. If he had done no good, he could have done less evil; the good was the bait that got the evil swallowed. He raised a sum of nearly 20,000 dollars by his notes on an edition of Corneille for the benefit of a poor orphan girl, the descendant of that illustrious poet; he succeeded in clearing the memory of Calas, probably unjustly accused of strangling his son; he saved the life of Sirven perhaps also unjustly accused of murdering his daughter; he assisted in obtaining some relaxation in the severity of some penal laws which were not half as merciless as most of those prevalent fifty years ago in Ireland. But these cheap services were exactly of the kind to catch popular sympathy. Raising a violent outcry against an ecclesiastical abuse which at the very worst could do comparatively little harm, gains us the applause of the world, but if we are really inspired with a love of humanity, why not exclaim aloud against the wholesale slaughter of the countless victims to the ambition of kings and emperors? So far from remonstrating with Catherine for her cruelties, he actually offered to sell her some trump-cry war-machine of his own invention by which, as he said, an army of ten thousand men could be annihilated at one blow. By his attacks on parliaments he destroyed the only legitimate barrier between despotism on one side and anarchy on the other, thus rendering a hideous and sanguinary revolution inevitable. He carried on an immense and ever-extending correspondence with the monarchs of Europe, many of whom he flattered immensely by writing to them at all, and most of whom he ended by bringing around to his own way of dealing with ecclesiastical matters. They and their nobles understood him to say: "Destroy the Church and you can do what you please with the people!" The people understood him to say: "Destroy the Church and you can do what you please with the

nobles and the kings!" Both obeyed him as well as they were able. Of the two the people were certainly less blamable in allowing themselves to be deceived, for they had latterly found their rulers both exceedingly selfish and exceedingly unfaithful.

He was 84 years of age when Madame Denis, his niece, long since weary of Ferney, at last induced him to return to Paris. His arrival created a great excitement, philosophers, lords and ladies of high rank, the Academy, actors, and men of letters overwhelming him with attentions through curiosity or real admiration. The fatigue bringing on a hemorrhage, he thought himself on the point of death and sent for a priest. The Abbé Gauthier administered the last sacraments, having first obtained from the sick man a signed paper declaring that he wished to die in the Catholic Church, in which he had been born, and that he humbly asked pardon of God and the Church for all the offences of which he had ever been guilty. But the hemorrhage stopping, in two weeks he felt quite strong again; in two more he ventured out of his house to witness the representation of one of his best pieces *Irène* in the *Théâtre-Français*. There a reception awaited him such as had never been granted to the most idolized of monarchs or to the bravest warrior that ever saved his native land. His bust, placed on the stage, was crowned amidst the wildest applause; again and again he had to come to the front of his box to show himself to his frenzied admirers. "You are smothering me with roses!" he cried in an ecstasy of pleasure.

But he is not dead yet. He resumes his old life, and for two months longer shows as much spirit and ambition as the youngest around him. He invites the French Academy to start the dictionary on a new plan, offering himself to take charge of the letter A. He pays visits to nobility and princes, notably to the Duke de Chartres, where he sees Louis Philippe and compliments him on his resemblance to the Regent. He is actually purchasing a house for a protracted stay in Paris when he is suddenly attacked with strangury, his old complaint. This time, however, instead of listening to his physician, who orders the most absolute repose, he takes some quack medicine



handed him by Marshal Richelieu, *Brother Cain*, as Voltaire himself calls him with his last sigh. The drug plunges him into stupor from which he never recovers. Abbé Gauthier has to leave him, saying he is in no state to receive the last rites.

How did he die? Impiously and scornfully? as the "philosophers" aver; or like a madman howling with rage and terror? as many unimpeachable witnesses testify. What does his own physician say, the famous Tronchin, who introduced inoculation into France, who was neither cleric nor philosopher, and who attended him at his last illness? He speaks candidly enough. "If my principles had needed strengthening," he writes, "the man whose death agony I have just witnessed, would have bound them up into a gordian knot. The death of a good man, the pleasant close of a beautiful day, compared with that of Voltaire, shows all the difference between a calm and a tempest. . . . In spite of my injunctions he had gone to the Academy and the last *séance* was too much for him. From that moment till the day of his death his life was one hurricane of madness. The drugs that he had taken to give himself strength threw him into the most frightful state of despair and insanity. I recall it now with horror. As soon as he saw that what he had done to strengthen himself had produced the contrary effect, death was continually before his eyes. Rage instantly took possession of his soul. . . . Remember the raving madness of Orestes — *furiis agitatus obiit* (he expired tortured to death by the furies)."

The pastor not allowing the body to be interred in the parish of S. Sulpice, Abbé Mignot, Voltaire's nephew, had it embalmed and buried in his own abbey at Scellières, on the Seine, whence, on the destruction of the monastery, thirteen years later, the remains were removed by a decree of the National Assembly, and transferred to the Church of Sainte Geneviève in Paris, at that time called the Panthéon.

For a long time mankind will differ regarding the merits of Voltaire. Many consider him a monster, a demon incarnate, a curse to the human race; others worship him as the destroyer

of superstition, ignorance, and barbarism. But nobody claims for him the merit of originating a single principle of solidity or truth. Giving him every credit for extraordinary grace, clearness and vivacity, we have great difficulty in discovering what may be called *heart* in his writings; of deep feeling, the origin of true eloquence as of true poetry, he seems almost completely destitute. He has no regard for truth. To make fun, he has no hesitation in calling Shakespeare "an ugly ape," an "inspired idiot," a "big madman everywhere but in London." To gain his point, he utters without the slightest compunction the most atrocious falsehoods, confidently relying on the ignorance of his readers to get them swallowed. Why was he so powerful? Because he was the exact echo of the age in which he lived, of its levity, licentiousness, enervation, blasphemy, mockery, shallow science, sham philanthropy, and intense and stupidly reckless selfishness. He did not originate the Revolution; far from it, but, if he had been a better man, the unquestioned advantages of that great upheaval would not have been almost counterbalanced by its unquestioned horrors, from the consequences of which we are suffering even at the present day.

Here is Victor Hugo's opinion on the merits of "King Voltaire."

"Voltaire leaves us a monument more astonishing by its extent than imposing by its grandeur. It is not an edifice of the august order. It is no palace for kings, it is no hospital for the poor. It is a bazar, elegant, vast, easily moved through, irregular; displaying untold riches flung on mud-heaps; offering to every interest, to every vanity, to every passion the very thing that suits it best; dazzling to the eye, but rank to the nostril; presenting impurities as pleasures; alive with merchants, tramps, idlers, but seldom showing a priest or a poor workingman. Here are splendid galleries thronged incessantly with wonder-lost crowds; there are dark caverns which nobody boasts of having ever visited. Under those sumptuous arcades you can find countless masterpieces of art and taste, glittering with gold and diamonds; but for the bronze statue, with the severe and classic forms of antiquity, you may look in vain. Decorations for your parlors

and boudoirs you will find in abundance, but no ornament for your sanctuary, for your oratory. And woe to the weak man who has nothing but his *soul* to lose, if he exposes it to the seductions of this magnificent abode, of this monstrous temple in which everything is thought of except truth, and everything worshipped except God!"

Note 38 — DELLE SEDIE — page 42.

ENRICO C. A. DELLE SEDIE (1826 —), Italian barytone singer of some note, appeared at Rome and Milan in 1857, at Vienna in 1860, and in 1861 at Paris where he succeeded Graziani who had gone to St. Petersburg. After holding the position of Professor in the Conservatoire for some time he started a singing-school of his own with great success. His favorite part is *Renato* in the *Ballo in Maschero*. His *Art Lyrique* has been adopted as a text-book in the conservatories of St. Petersburg, Bologna, Parma, etc.

Note 39 — MADAME TALMA — page 44.

CECILE C. VANHOVE (1771–1860), born at the Hague, daughter of a French comedian, was one of the most remarkable actresses of her day. Tragedy, comedy, farce were all equally within the bounds of her domain. She made her *début* in the *Théâtre-Français* as *Iphégenie* in Racine's play with immense success though only fourteen years of age. She married Talma in 1802, and abandoned the stage in 1811 before the rising star of Made-moiselle Mars. She devoted the rest of her life to writing *Mémoires*, *Souvenirs de Talma* (after his death), *Studies on the Theatrical Arts*, which are highly instructive and interesting, especially to actors.

Note 40 — LEMERCIER — page 44.

NEPOMUCÈNE LOUIS LEMERCIER (1771–1840), a poet and dramatic author of great power and originality, wrote a play at 16, which his godmother the Princess de Lamballe interested herself so much in as to have it performed in the *Théâtre-Français*. Though a great lover of liberty and independence, the

Revolution found him only a weak democrat. His *Tartufe Révolutionnaire* (1795) was considered so reactionary as to be suppressed by the Directory, but *Agamemnon* his master-piece, was played with immense success in 1797, and it still remains one of the best pieces on the classic stage. His comedy *Pinto*, also a success, deserves especial mention; though to all intents and purposes a tragedy, the dialogue all through is prose, the prestige and other allurements of poetry being rigidly excluded. Lemercier, therefore, though the romanticists do not recognize him and though he violently disavows their doctrines himself, is really the father of the Romantic school. Other innovations of his, however, gave the public but little satisfaction, neither his taste nor his style being always correct, though he is generally striking and original. During the Consulate he was a friend of Napoleon's and received from him the cross of the Legion of Honor, but on Napoleon's accession to the throne he sent it back with thanks, and acted with the same frankness at the Restoration. He was elected to the Academy in 1819. Though an incessant worker, he was so singularly pleasant in social intercourse that Talleyrand pronounced him to be the best talker in France. On his tomb is the following inscription composed by himself:

He was a good man and he cultivated literature.

The number of his works is immense and they are all remarkable. His *Panhypocrisiade* is perhaps the greatest; it is a satirical comedy, remarkably bold in thought, expression, learning, and imagination, but in spite of its immense genius it is to-day little known and never read.

Note 41 — POTIER— page 51.

CHARLES GABRIEL POTIER (1775-1838), a celebrated comic actor, left school when a mere boy to join the army. On his return to Paris, feeling a strong predilection for the stage, he applied for a position, but the manager laughed at him, saying he had neither person nor voice. Noway discouraged, however, he played in the provinces with great success, but he was

more than thirty before he became a favorite with the Parisian public. Though he never played in the *Théâtre-Français* he may be considered without exaggeration to be one of the greatest comic actors of the day, his gaiety, originality, intelligence and his whole style of acting fully compensating for the extreme weakness of his voice. Among his best rôles are *The Elderly Young Man*, and the *Burgomaster of Saardam*.

Note 42 — MONVEL — page 51.

JACQUES MARIE BOUTET, surnamed DE MONVEL (1745-1811), actor and dramatic poet, played at the *Théâtre-Français* with great success from 1770 to 1781, assisting Molé and occasionally replacing him, though very far indeed from possessing the natural graces and the brilliant prestige of that renowned actor. At Lekain's death (1778), he attempted the highest tragic rôles, but the weak state of his health soon sent him back to what he was best suited for. Expelled from France in 1781 for some cause not well known, he was well received by the King of Sweden, who made him his reader and one of his chief players. Sometime after his return to Paris, he collected together in what was then called the *Théâtre de la République*, now the *Théâtre-Français*, many of the old actors that had been dispersed by the troubles of the Revolution. His success even in his old age was remarkable. In fact, this actor, probably one of the most intelligent that ever trod the boards, would have undoubtedly risen to the highest excellence if his personal advantages had even tolerably corresponded with his wonderful genius and his profound knowledge of the art. It was of Monvel that Mademoiselle Clairon said: "An Achilles is announced to us, or a Hector, or some other dauntless hero whose valiant arm has just achieved a famous victory over enemies numbering at least ten to one; or it is some dazzling prince for whom a charming princess has just sacrificed her throne and her life. But what do we see? A little man, lank, meagre, and hardly able to speak! How do you expect us to maintain the illusion?" But Monvel managed to maintain it. In pathos particularly he has never been surpassed. His whole face was lit by his eyes,



which were very large and expressive. In spite of the loss of his teeth, his solid knowledge of the value of words, his constant attention to clear articulation, his perfect acquaintance with stage detail, soon reconciled the spectators to his physical defects. To the double talent of author and actor he added that of being the most seductive of readers. This his fellow actors knew well. He had so often palmed off poor stuff on them as something really excellent that they would never allow him to read a new piece that was submitted for their judgment. His plays, now mostly forgotten, obtained him a seat in the Academy and a professorship in the *Conservatoire*. His best work, however, was his daughter and pupil, the famous Made-moiselle Mars, who always went by her mother's name.

Note 43 — ANDRIEUX — page 51.

FRANÇOIS G. J. S. ANDRIEUX (1759-1833), a celebrated man of letters, dramatic author, tribune, professor, Academician, and finally perpetual secretary of the French Academy. When a member of the Council of 500 he wrote an extensive treatise on Public Instruction, in which he severely condemned the idea of making every one a scholar; one simple, fairly instructed man, he says, having good common sense, is better than a thousand half-philosophers. It was he who, when charged by Bonaparte with factious resistance to the Code, uttered the famous saying: "*Citizen Consul, we can lean only on what resists!*" His first comedy was *Anaximandre* (1782), but his best known drama is *Les Etourdis*. He also composed some charming poems, his *Meunier de Sans Souci*, and *Promenade de Fénélon* being still as popular as any of La Fontaine's fables. While professor, though his voice was feeble, he always made himself heard by his wit, grace, and urbanity, his favorite motto being, *we must please if we expect to instruct*.

Note 44 — BOUFFÉ — page 52.

MARIE BOUFFÉ (1800 —), famous melodramatic actor, born in Paris, son of a decoration painter, passed half his childhood

at school half in the street, and his boyhood in the small theatres. His success at the *Nouveautés* theatre in 1827 established his reputation. From 1831 onwards he enjoyed many unquestioned triumphs in such pieces as *The Miser's Daughter*, *Poor James*, *The Strolling Players*, *The Gamin of Paris*, etc. He was wonderfully real. It was not Bouffé you saw on the stage, but some simple old priest, some audacious street Arab, some grasping hooked-nose miser. He was a real comedian, exciting at will the laughter or the tears of the audience, and often displaying touches of character that bordered on the highest art. He retired at 64, his benefit in the Grand Opera house, ceded to him expressly by Napoleon III., realized upwards of five thousand dollars. He never played in the *Théâtre-Français*.

Note 45 — THÉÂTRE-FRANÇAIS, otherwise COMÉDIE FRANÇAISE—  
page 53.

The origin of this famous theatre dates back to 1580 when the *Confrères of the Passion* sold the Hôtel Bourgogne, in the *Rue Mauconseil*, the former residence of the last Duke of Burgundy, to the only regular actors at that time in Paris, called the *Troupe Royale* and paid by the King a yearly subsidy of 12,000 *livres*. Towards 1600 another but smaller theatre was started in the quarter of Paris called the *Marais* and thence took its name. These were the only theatres in Paris, besides the *Petit-Bourbon* where only Italians played, in 1658, when Molière arrived with his troupe from the provinces. This troupe, first surnamed *de Monsieur* and afterwards *du Roi*, received a subsidy of 7000 *livres* and acted in the *Palais Royal* theatre erected by Cardinal Richelieu. As long as Molière lived he struggled very successfully against his rivals but, at his death (1673), his best actors joined the Bourgogne troupe, and the others united with the *Marais* troupe in a new theatre in the *Rue Mazarine*, the *Marais* theatre being demolished, and the *Palais Royal* given over to the Italians. The new combination, having the sole right to represent Molière's and many of Corneille's plays, and therefore proving a serious injury to the elder comedians, a stroke of Louis XIV.'s pen united the three com-

panies into one (1680), thus creating the THÉÂTRE-FRANÇAIS or COMÉDIE FRANÇAISE.

This and the French Academy are the only institutions of the ancient *régime* that have survived the French Revolution. To-day, nearly two centuries old, it is stronger than ever. Its privileges are so great that it has never had a real rival, being always first in tragedy and first in comedy.

The company soon removed to more commodious quarters in the street still called the *Rue de l'Ancienne Comédie*, where it remained for more than 80 years, playing among others the works of Regnard, Crébillon, Voltaire, Diderot and Beaumarchais. The building getting too old, the company took refuge in the *Tuileries* theatre, lent to them by the King, till 1782, when they installed themselves in their large new theatre, still in existence, called the Odeon. The Revolution attacked the *Théâtre-Français* as well as everything else; some of its members with Monvel at their head raised the tricolor, but many were put in prison for contumacy and the company generally was broken up for nine years. In 1799, it was reconstructed by Napoleon, and the Odeon being partially injured by fire, the *Comédie Française* was transferred to the *Variétés* theatre in the *Rue Richelieu*, where the *Théâtre-Français* has remained ever since.

The company existing to-day dates from the act of 1799, modified by Napoleon's "Moscow Decree" in 1812, and by a few others, one as late as 1859. It receives a yearly subsidy of sixty thousand dollars and, though allowed a great deal of liberty, its regulations are controlled by the State. It has 22 *sociétaires* or associates, each of whom receives his share of the profits and, when too old, retires on a pension. The company consists, besides, of a number of salaried actors, from whom the associates are mainly recruited. It forbids tragedy in any other theatre, and can claim whatever *élève* of the *Conservatoire* it considers promising. In return for all this, it is expected to present tragedy and comedy in the most correct and finished style both personal and scenic, and so far the world acknowledges that it has faithfully complied with its obligations. "The *Théâtre-*

*Français* is the glory of France," said Napoleon, "the Opera is only her vanity."

Note 46 — ALIZARD — page 56.

ADOLPHE J. L. ALIZARD (1814-1859), a distinguished singer, made his *début* as *Gessler* in *Guillaume Tell* at the Grand Opera in 1837. He played with great success the chief bass parts in *Robert Le Diable*, *Der Freischütz*, *Les Huguenots*, *La Favorite* and *Le Prophète*.

Note 47 — SCRIBE — page 60.

AUG. EUGENE SCRIBE (1791-1861), one of the best known dramatic authors of the century, born in Paris, the son of a respectable silk merchant, left an orphan when quite young, pursued quite an advanced course of studies at the College of Sainte Barbe with great success, to please his guardian who expected him to become a lawyer. But his propensity for the stage being too strong to be resisted, his legal studies were soon abandoned for dramatic composition. After a few failures, which his income of about 2000 dollars a year enabled him to endure with stoic patience, his jaunty liveliness at last succeeded in catching the favor of the Parisians even in those terrible years 1812, '13 and '14. From 1815 to 1830 his successes in light one-act comedies interspersed with singing, commonly called *vaudevilles*, produced usually with some *collaborateur* and generally performed at the *Variétés*, the *Vaudeville*, and from 1820 at the *Gymnase* for which he was engaged to write exclusively, were almost innumerable. He made the fortune of the *Gymnase* theatre in a few years, securing for himself also an elegant competence, the cross of the Legion of Honor, and a European reputation.

The July Revolution sobering Paris a little, he dropped the *vaudevilles* and, attempting a higher flight, produced five-act plays historical, satirical, even tragical, many of which were received with great distinction at the *Théâtre-Français*. Invading the stage in all directions, he wrote the *librettos* and superintended the *mise en scène* of nearly all the great operas of the French stage. These *librettos* were usually done with care

taste and finish ; in *La Muette de Portici*, *Robert Le Diable*, *Les Huguenots*, *Dame Blanche*, *Masaniello*, *L'Etoile du Nord*, *Les Diamants de la Couronne*, *Le Prophète*, *Fra Diavolo*, *Les Vêpres Siciliennes*, and *L'Africaine* the literary merit is often quite on a par with the fine music. With Legouv  , as already mentioned, he wrote *Adrienne*, *La Bataille des Dames*, *Les Doigts de F  e*, and *Les Contes de la Reine de Navarre*. For more than forty years his popularity was immense, many of his pieces being as well known in other countries as in France. He was elected Member of the French Academy in 1834.

His success was certainly well deserved. For depth, strength, breadth or individuality he cannot be compared to the old masters nor even to many writers for the modern French stage. High comedy he certainly could not reach, but he was an immense improvement on what was called light French comedy down to 1815. His pieces, no doubt, may be called superficial, difficult to be read a second time, glorifying material interests, and calculated to amuse the shallow, the idle and the gay *habitu  * of the *Boulevards* rather than the thoughtful man of the nineteenth century. That may be, but neither can it be denied that Scribe's pieces, amounting to more than 400, though sometimes betraying undue haste, are always remarkable for their perfect adaptation to the stage, their interesting and original plot, their sparkling and often eloquent dialogue, their rapid movement, varied incident, correct taste, general decency, pleasant *d  no  ment*, power to hold the attention of the audience, and their invariable fidelity to nature. In fact, his brilliant colonels, his rich old uncles, his growling but good-natured old fathers, his interesting widows, his innocent but piquant young ladies, his sentimental mothers, his whole world of gaiety, life and *bourgeois* heartiness were a perfect reproduction of the foibles, fashions and aspirations of the middle-class Parisians of the R  storation. In the art of constructing a light effervescent *vaudeville*, always amusing and at the same time giving us a correct delineation of *bourgeoisie* life, Scribe is a master that has never been surpassed.

Busy as ever to the last moment, in the seventieth year of his



age, he was riding one evening in his carriage to keep a business engagement when the coachman, opening the door, found only a corpse occupying the seat. He had died of apoplexy, without a moment's warning.

Note 48 — BRID'OISON — page 60.

BRID'OISON is a stuttering, stammering, ridiculous *Judge*, in Beaumarchais's famous *Mariage de Figaro*, the real prologue of the Revolution. *Brid'oison* has continued to the present day with good reason to be the type of a stupid, ignorant, formal judge, of the kind Dickens gives us a specimen of in *Mr. Justice Stareleigh*.

Note 49 — LAFON — page 72.

PIERRE LAFON (1773-1846), a tragic actor second only to Talma, a Gascon, disregarding his father's advice who wished him to be a doctor, joined a strolling provincial troupe when quite young and, coming to Paris in 1800, appeared in the *Théâtre-Français*, just then opened, as *Achilles*, in *Iphigenia in Aulis* with the most complete success. His fine person, handsome face, and good voice contributed considerably towards his popularity; even his super-refined dignity and grand way of doing the most trifling things, which the wits so often "went for," were not unattractive to his female admirers. Faithful to the classic school, he quitted the stage in 1829 before the invasion of the Romanticists, his farewell benefit netting him \$3000, and his retiring pension as associate of the *Français* bringing him \$1500 a year. His favorite characters were *Achilles*, in which even Talma hardly surpassed him, and *Orosmane* in Voltaire's *Zaïre*.

Note 49½ — COQUELIN — page 74.

BENOÎT CONSTANT COQUELIN (1841 —), one of the brightest stars of the modern *Théâtre-Français*, entered the *Conservatoire* in 1859, taking lessons from Regnier, and made his *début* in 1860 in *Le Dépit Amoureux* of Molière with some success, but the style in which, two years later, he played Beaumarchais's brilliant and exceedingly difficult creation *Figaro* took

Paris completely by surprise and made him a celebrity at the age of twenty-one. His precocity, however, did not injure his industry, his successful rôles to-day being too many to be enumerated. He has a fine figure, great intelligence, and one of the most magnificent voices of the day. Since 1864 he has been *sociétaire* of the *Théâtre-Français*. He is surnamed *l'ainé* (the elder) to distinguish him from a younger brother who is also an actor.

Note 50—JOMINI — page 75.

HENRI, BARON JOMINI (1779-1869), general and famous military critic, was born in Switzerland; he studied arms when young with the intention of entering the Swiss Body Guards, but the Revolution rendering this impossible, he entered a banking-house in Paris and remained there for some time. Returning in 1798 to Switzerland, at that time a French province, he succeeded in pleasing the authorities so well that he was soon made general secretary of the war department. In 1804, he joined the French army as *chef de bataillon*, followed Ney to Germany as aide-de-camp, and placed in Napoleon's own hands on the battle-field of Austerlitz his great strategic work a *Treatise on the Grand Operations of the War*. His distinguished services in the war with Prussia promoted him to be the chief of Ney's staff, with the title of Baron. He followed Ney into Spain, but the Marshal, being informed that his aide-de-camp attributed to himself all the successes of the campaign, became so angry that he dismissed him from the service. The Emperor of Russia instantly offered him a high position, but Napoleon would not allow him to enter the Russian service and attached him to Berthier's staff with the grade of general. Deeply hurt at this treatment, Jomini positively refused to bear arms actively against Russia, though he was unsparing in his exertions towards relieving the suffering French army in its disastrous retreat. Becoming reconciled with Ney and once more put at the head of his staff, he contributed so signally towards winning the victory of Bautzen that Ney strongly recommended his immediate nomination as general of division, but Berthier, yielding to some petty spite, had him placed

under temporary arrest for some trifling or pretended infraction of discipline.

Unable to endure such an indignity, Jomini took advantage of an armistice to leave the French camp and offer his sword to the Emperor of Russia at the very moment when the traitor Moreau joined the Allied Armies in their attack on his native land. Sentence of death was instantly passed on him as a deserter. The two cases have often been confounded by historians, but they are radically different. "Jomini was no traitor to his flag," writes Napoleon at Saint Helena; "smarting under a great injustice, he was blinded by what was after all only an honorable sentiment; besides he was no Frenchman, and therefore not bound to us by any laws of patriotism." Though received with open arms by the Russian Emperor and appointed aide-de-camp with grade of general of division, he neither betrayed his knowledge of the French plans nor took active part in the invasion of France, confining his exertions principally to preventing the Allies from committing blunders, and saving Switzerland from Austrian rapacity. In 1815, he made every effort, but in vain, to save the life of his old commander Ney, and remained in Paris till 1822 to superintend the publication of his military works. Returning to Russia, he performed the duties of military preceptor to the Grand Duke, organizer of the Imperial Military Academy, and military adviser to the Emperor till 1830, when he retired, first to Brussels and then to Paris, devoting the rest of his life to his numerous works on military criticism.

The value of these works to the military student is exceedingly high, no strategist surpassing Jomini in breadth of view or in clearness of convincing demonstration. His character for integrity and independence stands quite as high; in presence of his superiors he always maintained a most dignified attitude, never quailing before the mighty Napoleon himself.

Note 51 — D'AURE — page 75.

COMTE D'AURE (died in 1863), was for some time the head riding-master of the celebrated Cavalry School of Saumur on the

Loire, and afterwards manager of a government horse-raising establishment. His writings on horsemanship, etc., are held in high esteem. His principal works are: *A Treatise on Equitation*, with *plates*, etc. (1834); *Horses in Paris* (1835); *Practical Ideas regarding the Employment of Horse-labor* (1840).

Note 52 — **THE ASSEMBLY** — page 76.

According to the law of February, 1875, the legislative power of France is vested in two *Assemblies*, one called the *Chamber of Deputies*, and the other the *Senate*. The *Deputies*, about 500 in number, are elected directly by the people, every Frenchman twenty-one years of age being entitled to vote. The *Senate* consists of 300 members, of whom 225 are elected by the departments and colonies, and the other 75 by the NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. This NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, consisting of both the *Assemblies* united into one body, also elects the President of the Republic by an absolute majority of votes. The President's term is seven years, and he is re-eligible. He announces the laws and is responsible for their execution. He can grant an individual pardon but not a general amnesty. He is the commander-in-chief of the army, and appoints to all offices, civil and military. With the advice of the *Senate* he can dissolve the *Chamber of Deputies* at pleasure. His ministers are responsible to the Chambers for the general policy of the government, but the President himself is responsible only in case of high treason.

Note 53 — **BOSSUET** — page 77.

JACQUES BENIGNE BOSSUET (1627-1704), the most celebrated of French orators and prelates, born of an honorable family in Burgundy, received his early education in the Jesuit college of Dijon, where he showed himself from his tenderest years extremely docile, industrious, singularly intelligent, and rather of a serious disposition. He learned Greek and Latin with little trouble, Homer and Virgil being his favorite authors, but the book that he loved best of all was the Bible, a small Latin copy of which fell into his hands when quite a boy and which he may be said to have got completely by heart. "Bossuet," says

Lamartine, "was the Bible transfused into a man." He completed his studies in Paris, arriving there on the very day (1642) when Richelieu made his famous entry into the capital for the last time, dying, but triumphant over Cinq Mars and the enemies of France. Navarre College in which Bossuet was placed was at that time directed by Cornet, a man highly remarkable for piety and learning, who, at once divining the boy's genius, took especial care to cultivate it.

Here the young ecclesiastic applied himself with enthusiasm to his new studies and soon achieved great distinction in classics, sacred literature, and philosophy, though showing little or no taste for mathematics and the natural sciences. At sixteen he sustained his thesis in such a brilliant style that even the famous *Hotel Rambouillet*, a society at that time representing the cream of Parisian wit, beauty, virtue and nobility, expressed a strong desire to see the young prodigy. They even asked him to preach an extempore sermon in their presence; after a short meditation, he complied with their request in a manner that commanded their entire sympathy and admiration. Unspoiled, however, by such flatteries, he devoted himself with renewed ardor to his favorite studies, and at 21 graduated with a discourse so eloquent that the great general Condé who was present recalled it with admiration and delight as long as he lived. In 1652, after a solemn retreat at St. Lazare Church conducted by St. Vincent de Paul himself, Bossuet was ordained priest and, resisting the dazzling career offered to him in Paris, at once abandoned the splendid capital to devote himself to his modest duties as an humble pastor in Metz.

Here for seventeen years he devoted every spare moment to his favorite studies, the Bible, Saint Augustin and the Fathers generally, one of the fruits of which was soon seen in a *Reply* written by him in answer to a *Reformed Catechism*, composed by Paul Ferry, a Protestant minister highly esteemed in Metz for learning and uprightness. Bossuet's book had an extraordinary success even among the Protestants themselves, who were then very numerous in that part of France. Ecclesiastical matters often bringing him to Paris and his superiors naturally



not allowing him to leave the city without preaching, his sermons soon began to prove an irresistible attraction. "City and court flocked to listen; the two queens came from the palace and the nuns of Port Royal from their seclusion; Condé, Turenne, Madame de Sevigné and other famous contemporaries mingled with the crowd; and in 1662 the preacher's triumph reached a climax when, hearing him for the first time at the Louvre, Louis XIV., in a moment of rarely awakened enthusiasm, dispatched a royal messenger to Bossuet's father to congratulate him on having such a son."

Most of these discourses are now lost; few of them indeed were ever written out. An hour or two before entering the pulpit, he sat quietly meditating over his text; he scribbled some hasty notes on bits of paper, mostly appropriate passages from the Fathers, occasionally writing out a sentence more complicated than usual; then he surrendered himself completely to the effect produced by the spur of the moment and the impression made on his audience.

In 1669, he began the celebrated *Funeral Orations*, usually reckoned six in number, of which the critic La Harpe says: "They are masterpieces of a species of eloquence that could have had no model in antiquity, and which have never since been equalled. In them Bossuet does not employ the language of other men; he makes a language of his own; he makes it just as he requires it so as to suit his own peculiar manner of feeling, thinking, and uttering. He has made it all: expressions, turns, movements, constructions, harmony, all are his own." Of this species of sacred oratory he is indeed the real creator; nowhere does his genius take such wing as at the grave's mouth, when, recounting the virtues of the illustrious dead, he pictures, with wonderful sweep of imagination and mastery of detail, the historical events and personages of the epoch in which they lived, the more impressively to demonstrate that all earthly pomp and renown are shadows, not substantial things.

This same year he was made bishop of Condom, in Gascony, but on being shortly afterwards appointed preceptor to the

Dauphin, then nine years old, he instantly gave up a bishopric which his conscience would not allow him to derive any emolument from as long as he could not strictly attend to his duties. Fully believing too that the future welfare of France would probably depend in a great measure on the nature of the education which his pupil should receive, he threw himself at once with incredible energy into the duties of his preceptorship. Bossuet probably was not endowed with that enchanting natural sweetness which twenty years afterwards gave Fénélon such sway over the Dauphin's son. His reason was so direct, decided, and elevated, his sense of *duty* was so profound and uncompromising, that he appears to have almost persuaded himself that nothing more was necessary than to tell people what they had to do in order to get them to do it. In this, however, he was mistaken; he knew *man*, but he did not know *men*. His success as an educator was by no means equal to Fénélon's, though we must not forget that, besides being rather old when entrusted to Bossuet, the Dauphin was indolent and every way far inferior to his son in talents. It was for the instruction of his royal pupil that Bossuet composed, among other able works, an *Abridged History of France*, a *Treatise on the Knowledge of God and of Ourselves*, and particularly his famous *Discourse on Universal History*, of which the leading idea is to show that all changes in history are overruled with sole reference to the progress and universality of the Christian religion. The first attempt at a philosophical treatment of history, it is a work of surpassing power and learning, his friend Leibnitz, the celebrated mathematician and philosopher, forwarding him from Germany every book bearing on the subject that he could lay hands on.

In 1671, he was elected a member of the French Academy. About this time too appeared his remarkable *Exposition of Catholic Doctrine* which made so much noise in those days. He had at first printed an edition of only ten or twelve copies intended for private distribution among his friends, each of whom he requested to return his copy with whatever notes or suggestions he might think proper to write on the margin. All were

returned except two or three, among which was that sent to Turenne, the Marshal General of France, who not only kept his copy but became a Catholic, giving up the reformed religion in which he had been born. Some of the Reformed ministers, Daillé, Brueys, Jurieu and others, hearing of this, and charging the *Exposition* with toning down the harshness of the Roman dogma for the purpose of ensnaring their flocks, Bossuet determined to publish it. It received the highest approbation at Rome; it was immediately translated into all the European languages; and it produced such an effect on the Protestants themselves that many of them, minister Brueys among the number, were converted. Jurieu, its ablest, but rather irascible opponent, writes of it: "Everybody is gone mad over the *Exposition*; everywhere one hears of the most disgraceful perversions." Mademoiselle de Duras, a niece of Turenne's and the sister of another marshal of France, having begun to entertain from the reading of this book some doubts regarding her religion, mentioned the matter to her spiritual director, Jean Claude, a very learned divine and the soul of the reformed party. Claude assuring her that a few hours' oral discussion in her presence with Bossuet himself on the authority of the Church would soon rid her of her scruples, Bossuet at once accepted the challenge, always preferring a face to face encounter. The discussion lasted five hours and was the sensation of the time; it ended, as usual, in the regular drawn battle, except that Mademoiselle de Duras next day renounced her Calvinism.

Bossuet's chief recreation, during his preceptorship, was the formation of a literary, philosophical, and religious society consisting of some of the first scholars of the day, lay and clerical. Besides discussing every interesting subject of the moment, and submitting to the society's criticism whatever they contemplated publishing, the members made it a regular duty to take some passage in the Bible and read for the others whatever reflections, commentaries, and results it had inspired. The better to be able to give a satisfactory answer to the thousand and one questions continually coming up here for discussion, Bossuet contrived to find time to study Hebrew, and with such success

that an admirer asserts him to be no less familiar with the language of Moses than that of Homer. His intimate relations with the court, as might be expected, brought his stern and severe character into trouble now and then. But he never avoided it. In the courtier he never forgot the bishop. He remonstrated often and seriously with the luxurious but almost omnipotent monarch, and sometimes even succeeded in producing a temporary reform.

The education of the Dauphin being ended in 1681, by way of recompense Louis had Bossuet appointed to the see of Meaux. He instantly quitted the capital, and devoted the rest of his life, heart and soul, to the edification of his flock and the spiritual welfare of France. He again resumed his great sermons, though, being as usual practical and paternal, he never wrote them out; he composed numerous pastorals for his priests, pious exhortations for his nuns, sound instructions for the people, and a child's *Catechism* for the rising generation, that is still highly esteemed. We find him continually visiting the sick, teaching the poor to be patient, directing the hospitals, reforming the monasteries, and even catechising the children at Sunday-school.

In 1682, in consequence of serious disputes between the King and the Court of Rome regarding the *regalia* or the claim put forward by the Crown to administer the affairs of a vacant bishopric until such time as the new occupant would take the oath of fidelity, the French bishops held a great assembly, at which Bossuet pronounced the opening discourse. An ardent Gallican himself, yet seeing the heated state of men's minds, he advised the adoption of moderate counsels both by the Ultramontanists or Catholic party and the Ultra-Gallicans or French party. Being overruled, however, he was compelled to surrender, and was even appointed to draw up the famous four propositions that until lately have continued to be the state law of France. Louis was naturally highly pleased with them as they gave him the right to interfere in church matters, but the Pope, fully aware of the evil consequences of such interference both to Church and State, had them publicly burned in Rome.

In 1688, appeared Bossuet's greatest controversial work, *The History of the Variations of the Protestant Churches*, in which he undertook to demonstrate the weakness of the Reformed doctrines by contrasting their incoherencies and contradictions with the stability of Rome. "Never did Bossuet's genius," says Hallam, "find a subject more fit to display its characteristic impetuosity, its arrogance, or its cutting and merciless spirit of sarcasm." The work produced such an effect even on some German Reformers that the learned Molanus and the philosopher Leibnitz, at the instigation of the Duke of Brunswick, carried on a serious correspondence for several years with Bossuet on the possibility of once more reconciling the Lutherans with the Church of Rome. But, as might be expected, though Bossuet showed a willingness to give up minor matters, the negotiation never produced any serious result. His adversaries reproach him with having advised the unwise and unjust *Revocation of the Edict of Nantes*, but the charge has never been proved; in spite of his stern character he always did his utmost to secure to Protestants as much liberty as was possible under the existing law, and no military execution was ever allowed to take place during his episcopate at Meaux.

Bossuet's last trouble was by far the most unpleasant of all and for awhile caused him considerable pain. Madame Guyon, a lady of remarkable piety and asceticism, had promulgated a doctrine called *Quietism*, which, however harmless it may be when kept within the bounds of moderation, if carried too far must certainly result in the most deplorable consequences. Fénelon, now archbishop of Cambray, considering the doctrine as a mere principle, viewed it from its innocent side and might in some respects be called its defender. But Bossuet, accustomed to the severe and positive language of Scripture, looked with angry suspicion on a bewildering doctrine that set aside as useless such practices as good works, prayers, frequentation of the sacraments, etc., and could not comprehend a devotion to God so intense that by the very force of loving him we might forget to serve him. Madame Guyon still persisting, the bishops openly denounced her books, and Bossuet wrote a complete



and direct refutation of the new "mysticism." Fénelon, believing that his friend was misunderstood and undertaking in a book, called the *Maxims of the Saints*, to prove that though her *words* might possibly be wrong her *meaning* might certainly be right, Bossuet seemed to lose all patience; he induced the King to exile Fénelon from court and send his book to Rome for condemnation. The Pope, after some hesitation, having declared it somewhat heretical, Fénelon submitted at once with unaffected humility, but the rigid and severe Bossuet felt so sore on the subject that for some time he seemed to think that the Pope himself did not entertain a sufficiently enlightened view on the question.

He was now old, but his industry never relaxing a moment, he wrote, among other works, a vigorous treatise against *Theatres*, and an able attack on Dupin and other travellers for their rashness in pretending to have discovered traces of the Deluge. In his seventy-seventh year the venerable prelate was busily engaged in a dissertation on a prophecy of Isaias when a severe fever, aggravating his old disease the gravel, carried him off. His last words were *Fiat voluntas tua!* (thy will be done.)

Of Bossuet, the "Modern Father of the Church," the "Cornille of Preachers," the "Eagle of Meaux," as he has been variously surnamed, it can be said without hesitation that in pure oratory, that is, the employment of living words for the purpose of persuasion, he has never been surpassed by ancient or modern. He descends to no artifice, he balances no periods, he never hesitates in a choice of words, he never thinks of himself, he despises the ornamental, he spurns the beautiful, he wishes only to convince, and the innate strength of his thought carries him indomitably along. The study of the Bible has stamped on his language a lofty, universal, and prophetic character; his heart alone speaks, ordinary human motives being never thought of. Borrowing his own expression: "Eloquence followed him, like a handmaid, not carefully sought after, or led by the hand, but naturally and inevitably, being irresistibly impelled by the force of circumstances."

Bossuet was mild and gentle in his manners, and, except in his controversy with Fénelon, never seems to have forgotten the usual serenity of his temper.

He cared so little for money that he died somewhat in debt. He was buried at Meaux where his monument, erected by the Department, can still be seen, his grave and even the pulpit from which he preached having, by some wonder, escaped violation from the Vandals of the Revolution.

Note 54—**MASSILLON**—page 78.

JEAN BAPTISTE MASSILLON (1663-1742), the Racine of the pulpit, son of a notary in Provence, received his education from the Oratorian Fathers in Hyères College, where his favorite amusement was to collect his playmates around him while he entertained them by preaching in a natural and agreeable style whatever had most caught his fancy in the Sunday sermon. This and other unmistakable signs of a vocation proving at last too strong for his father, who had intended him for his own profession, he entered the congregation of the Oratorians in his eighteenth year, devoting himself, however, to philosophy and theology rather than to eloquence, for which he conceived he had no particular talent. But not finding the rules of the order severe enough, and the better to guard himself against the demon of vanity, he abruptly left Hyères and buried himself as a simple monk in the remote monastery of the Seven Fountains. No one, however, can escape his destiny. Being ordered by the Abbot to reply to a rescript sent by Cardinal de Noailles, he performed the task in a style so superior to what could be expected from the monks of such a wilderness, that the Cardinal, unwilling that such talents should be lost to the Church, restored the writer to the Oratorians. They appointed him professor of rhetoric and theology in several colleges in the south of France, where he discharged his duties with such distinction that he was sent to Paris in 1696 to take charge of the seminary of Saint Magloire.

Here he composed his first ecclesiastical *conferences*, simpler and more familiar than his sermons of a late date, but already

full of point, strength, and life. He admired the wit and talent of the great Parisian preachers of the day, but, Bossuet and Bourdaloue excepted, he did not like their style. They were too theatrical and declamatory, he thought, refining too much, wasting time on mere externals, and proclaiming truths too vague and general to be useful. The *heart*, he considered, they rather neglected; though it was this seat of our passions, emotions, illusions, and self-deceptions that should be attacked by reason and sentiment in the closest combination; by laying bare the secret springs of our actions, by tearing away the insidious veil and deceptive varnish that egotism attempts to disguise them with, by revealing them to us in all their native deformity, he considered he could put us best on our guard, and actually arm us against ourselves. This seems to be the key to his peculiar eloquence. His success in Montpellier where he had been sent to preach the Lenten sermons in 1698 was so decided that he was appointed to perform the same duty in Paris on the year following.

The profound emotion excited by his opening discourse would have spoiled a speaker whose vanity was less on its guard. But he knew himself too well. "Stop, stop, Father," said he to a friend who had begun to congratulate him, "the Devil is telling me all that in terms far more eloquent than yours." The venerable Bourdaloue, who had come to hear him, was so delighted that he could not help exclaiming in the words of Saint John: "*Hunc oportet crescere, me autem minui*" (he must increase but I must decrease). When Massillon appeared in the pulpit he did not exactly close his eyes, like the celebrated Jesuit preacher, but he stood for some time with head bent, with no gesture and little movement. But as he kindled with his subject, his accent, look, and gesture became so animated and so profoundly magnetic that Baron, the famous tragedian and Molière's favorite pupil, exclaimed aloud one day to a companion: "That's an orator, a real orator; we are only players." Some great courtier, La Harpe the critic tells us, riding one evening to a new opera, found his carriage so completely blocked by a line of carriages moving to a church where Massillon was

preaching, that, while waiting to be extricated, he thought he would enter the church for a few minutes himself, just to kill the time; but he was so struck with the appropriateness of the text *Thou art the man!* and the striking style in which it was treated that he returned home thoroughly reformed and disposed to regard the incident as altogether providential. It was in this same year that, being appointed at the King's request to preach the Advent course at the Royal chapel, Versailles, he extorted from Louis the well-known words: "Father, I have heard many orators who have made me pleased with them, but you make me displeased with myself."

It was at Versailles that the peroration of his celebrated sermon on *The small number of the Elect* produced a most extraordinary sensation. "Imagine, my brethren," he exclaimed, "that the last hour was come, that the heavens suddenly opened above you, and that Christ appeared in all his glory to judge us assembled here in this temple. . . . Who are His? You cannot answer; neither can I. . . . But if we know not who are His, we know that sinners do not belong to Him. . . . Titles and dignities count as nothing. . . . Appear, ye just ones! Where are ye? Remnant of Israel, pass to the right! Wheat of Christ, separate yourself from the straw destined for the flames! O God, where are Thy Elect? What remains for Thy share?" These words, spoken as an archangel would have spoken them, produced an instantaneous movement. The whole audience, including the King, sprang to their feet in a transport of terror as if the last trumpet had sounded. The preacher covered his face with his hands and remained silent for a few moments. "Never," says Voltaire in the *Encyclopédie*, "in ancient or modern times did orator venture on a bolder figure, never was there a more daring stroke of real eloquence."

Bossuet and Bourdaloue passing away in 1704 and Flechier in 1709 left Massillon, the last great orator of a great age, to preach the funeral sermon over Louis XIV. in 1715. His exordium was profoundly touching. Taking for his text the passage from Solomon: "Behold, I am great, and have surpassed in wisdom all those who have been before me in Jerusalem;"

and I have perceived that it was all vanity and vexation of spirit," he pronounced the words slowly, then rolling his eyes over the vast multitudes dressed in mourning, over the walls hung with funeral drapery, and fixing them on the grand mausoleum erected in the midst of the temple, he was silent for a moment or two, before he exclaimed in a voice vibrating with emotion: "God alone is great, my brethren! He always is what He appears to be, but man is never what he fancied he was!"

Nominated to the bishopric of Clermont by the Regent in 1717, before departing he was asked to preach a Lenten discourse before the young King, then only nine years old. *Le Petit Carême* was the result, composed in his fifty-sixth year. This famous work, his masterpiece, a Christian's commentary on Fénelon's *Télémaque*, consists of ten sermons treating generally on the condition of the French nobility, reminding them of their duties to God and man, and threatening their downfall in terms that are almost prophetic. Enumerating, of course with the proper artifices of style and the precautions of evangelical charity all the vices and disorders that were dooming them to a sure destruction, he shows all through that, while desirous to reform them, he has little sympathy with them, his heart being faithful to the great family of the humble and oppressed from which himself had sprung. This course might be called the cry of the lowly against the oppression of the great, the youth of the prince he addressed permitting him bolder expression of home truths than he would have ventured on in the presence of older monarchs. Some critics, Legouvé among the number, seem to think the *Petit Carême* rather inclined to monotony, periphrase and repetition, but the circumstances under which it was delivered explain away some of this, and Voltaire admired the work so much that he constantly kept a copy on his desk, referring to it continually as a model of the best prose eloquence. Massillon, unlike Bossuet, had neither a retentive memory nor a ready command of language, and he was therefore always obliged to write out his sermons with great care beforehand; this is one reason why they are still almost as



good when read as when heard, though the profoundly pathetic and sympathizing voice of the speaker contributed powerfully towards producing the effect. One day he stopped short suddenly, before the King, in the midst of his discourse, remaining almost a minute before he could recover the thread. "You did well, Father," said Louis gracefully after the sermon was over; "you did well to give us time to relish your most instructive and interesting lessons." He produced the greatest effect by the sermons that he had himself studied most deeply. "What is your best sermon?" asked a friend one day. "The sermon that I have best by heart," was his candid reply. This year he was elected to the Academy, where he appeared but once, and then only to pronounce his reception discourse which was a new surprise to all that heard it, its taste, style, grace and wit placing it far above the most polished discourses of the day.

His conduct as bishop for the last twenty-four years of his life was marked by his usual zeal, prudence, charity and piety. He assisted the poor by his purse as well as his pen, and obtained from the government a diminution of the heavy taxes that oppressed the province of Auvergne. He secretly sent twenty thousand *livres* to the Hospital of Clermont, and hearing of a convent where the nuns, though in a state of starvation, would not complain for fear of being suppressed, he sent them sufficient funds, but with such secrecy that it was only after his death that they know who had been their benefactor. Having reached his seventy-ninth year, he died as he had lived, revered by all, fearing the Lord, loving mankind, without money, and without debt.

The character of his eloquence is a simple, noble, interesting, natural, and affectionate manner, a style pure, correct, and chaste, softly entering the soul, never harrowing it. Voltaire, who read him continually to maintain his own inimitable style, characterizes him as "the preacher who best understood the world, whose eloquence, more agreeable and ornamented than Bourdaloue's, combined at once the courtier, the academician, the wit, and the moderate and tolerant philosopher."

Here are a few of his sayings that show how profound was his knowledge of the human heart:

Agreeable advice is seldom sound advice.

Real piety is known by elevating the mind, ennobling the heart, and strengthening the courage.

Fortune may lift us very high, but happiness is still far beyond her reach.

As if our own miseries were not enough, we manufacture another's prosperity into a new one.

Jealousy is the silent acknowledgment of mediocrity.

Even in our praises a selfish motive is generally found to be lurking.

The worst of all traitors is the flatterer.

Note 55 — **BOURDALOUE** — page 78.

LOUIS BOURDALOUE (1632-1704), another of France's greatest orators, born at Bourges, and educated by the Jesuits, became one of the most illustrious members that ever belonged to that famous order, but, though occupying a dazzling position in a remarkable century, his life hardly presents incident enough to form a sketch. Occupied incessantly with his duties, he never thought of ecclesiastical preferment or took active part in the religious disputes that disturbed this lively period. His sermons are his biography. His first attempts were made in Normandy, where they soon excited so much admiration that he was summoned by the court to Paris to take the place that Bossuet on becoming the Dauphin's preceptor had been obliged to leave vacant. The perfect reasoning and systematic method of his very first discourse were highly relished even by ears that were still ringing with his famous predecessor's brilliant improvisations. But to say that Bourdaloue was only admired would not be enough; even the court heard him with enthusiasm. "Never have I heard anything," writes Madame de Sévigné to her daughter, "more beautiful, more noble or more astonishing than Father Bourdaloue's sermons." "By Jove, he's right," exclaimed old Marshal de Grammont one day right in the middle of the sermon, unable to control his admiration, and in a voice loud enough to be heard by half the audience. Louis XIV. always treated him with particular friendship and regard, protesting every time he heard him that "he relished Father Bourdaloue's repetitions better than the novelties of anybody

else." When sent to Languedoc, after the revocation of the edict of Nantes, to instruct the Protestants, Louis consoled himself for his absence by saying: "We may have to listen perhaps ourselves to mediocre preachers, but the Languedoc people will learn sound morality and sound doctrine." In this delicate mission his good sense enabled him to reconcile the interests of his ministry with the sacred rights of humanity, and Catholics and Protestants showed themselves equally eager to recognize in the eloquent missionary the apostle of truth and virtue.

The weakness of old age and a severe cough obliged him to give up preaching during the last ten years of his life, but he devoted himself incessantly to the poor, the hospitals and the prisons. He died on the field of battle and in full harness, his feeble health never interrupting his regular visits or his duties in the confessional. He said mass on the very day before he died.

Bourdaloue is justly considered to be the reformer of the French pulpit, the founder of Christian eloquence, and the first model of a good preacher. He is distinguished from his predecessors by the convincing force of his arguments and the unanswerable solidity of his proofs. In the vivid imagination and splendor of style that mark the finished orator he may be wanting. In reading him, critics may miss Bossuet's fiery zeal, Massillon's penetrating grace and unction, and may consider that in his ardor to convince he rejects as useless everything tending to touch or to please. But his reasoning is of such a superior order that he often both touches and pleases. He clothes the truth with such a luminousness and presents it with such force that our minds, while accepting it, are filled with both delight and emotion. His clearness captivates our attention and his vigorous reasoning fills us with a pleased admiration. His genius is less allied to Bossuet's than to that of Pascal whom he certainly equals in the strength of his common sense and the systematic regularity of his method. He is read to-day less than Massillon, but that is our fault rather than his; to relish Bourdaloue as he should be relished, our minds should be ripened by serious study and enlightened by a sincere love for the solid, the lasting, and the true.

Note 56 — SAINTE-BEUVE — page 81.

CHARLES AUGUSTIN SAINTE-BEUVE (1804-1869), poet, critic, senator, member of the French Academy, was born at Boulogne. Losing his father, a collector of the revenues, very young, he was taught English by his mother, and, coming to Paris to finish his education, graduated at the College Charlemagne. Wishing to secure a profession, he studied medicine for some time, though writing occasionally in the *Globe*, but the appearance of Victor Hugo's *Odes and Ballads* (1826) made him renounce everything for literature. He joined the *Cénacle*, became a violent romanticist, and (1828) published his first work *A Historical and Critical Picture of the French Poetry of the 16th Century*, which placed him at once at the head of the critics of the day. But his first poetic attempt, *The Life, Poetry, and Thoughts of Joseph Delorme*, though published anonymously as the work of a young poet just dead, unknown and neglected, was by no means a success. Some wit killed it by the nickname *Werther Carabin* (the Sorrows of a Saw-bones). His *Consolations*, however, which appeared soon after, are still read with interest as the dreamy, mystic, tender reveries of a soul endeavoring to struggle out of the pit of doubt and despair into the regions of light and faith. But *Autumn Musings* showed no progress, retrogression rather, being ungraceful in style and painful to read.

The Revolution of 1830 having dispersed the *Cénacle* and the *Globe* falling into the hands of Pierre Leroux the famous socialist, Sainte-Beuve coquetted for awhile with the Saint-Simonians, though he could never be induced to wear their dress. But he soon left the new religion to attach himself to the *Revue des Deux Mondes* and the *National*, both started about this time. In 1834, he published a romance called *Pleasure*, a morbid pathological study, singular rather than either pleasing or interesting. In 1840, he published the first volume of the history of *Port Royal*, a long-winded work full of detail, which his appointment as director of the Mazarine library enabled him to complete at last in no less than twenty years. Many critics consider this to be one of the most remarkable literary produc

tions of the day. It is really astonishing to find in it such a confirmed sceptic as Sainte-Beuve identifying himself so thoroughly with the acts and doctrines of the Jansenists; the most zealous advocate for *Grace* could not have dealt sturdier blows in its behalf. In 1845, he entered the French Academy. In 1850, he began his famous critical series in the *Constitutionnel*, called *Monday Talks* (*Causeries de Lundi*). His friendship for Louis Napoleon procured him a place on the *Moniteur* after the *coup d'état*, and also an appointment as professor of Latin poetry in the College of France, which, however, the noisy demonstrations of the students, who did not like his imperialism, soon compelled him to resign. From 1857 to 1861 he held a position in the Normal School; and in 1865 he was elevated by the Emperor to the Senate, where his violent support of Renan made him somewhat obnoxious to the Ultramontanes.

It is in his literary criticisms that Sainte-Beuve's varied flexible and sometimes piquant style appears at its best, but his writings present few specimens of real greatness. Holding no deep or absolute convictions on any subject, he examines religion and philosophy rather like the mere probing *dilettante* than the bold thinker who honestly endeavors to throw what light he can on the thousand problems that so profoundly interest humanity. In reading Sainte-Beuve, we cannot help feeling that, while often subtle and penetrative, he is so only with regard to comparative trifles, and that he is actually afraid to dive deep enough lest he should bring up something likely to disturb his serene equanimity.

Note 57—PASCAL—page 85.

BLAISE PASCAL (1623-1662), geometrician, physicist, philosopher, creator of French style, and Christian writer of extraordinary power, had no teacher but his father, a president of the Court of the Assessors of Auvergne, who, losing his wife a few years after his marriage, resigned his office and removed to Paris, the better to direct the education of his children, a son and two daughters. From his tenderest years young Pascal had manifested an extraordinary liking for the natural sciences, and now, instead of devoting his leisure hours to the ordinary



amusements of his age, he passed them in listening to the *Conferences* regularly held at his father's house by several of the most celebrated scholars and philosophers of the epoch. He even read for them one day a little treatise, composed in his eleventh year, in which he attempted to explain on scientific principles why a plate sounds when struck with a knife, and why it ceases to sound when touched by the finger.

Hearing the word *geometry* often alluded to in these discussions, he asked his father the meaning of the term. The father, who wished to prolong as far as possible the time for cultivating his son's memory and imagination rather than his judgment, tried to put him off by saying he would teach him geometry as soon as he knew his Greek and Latin perfectly. The boy persisting, the father told him impatiently that for the present he should be satisfied with knowing that geometry was the science by which correct figures were drawn and their proportions ascertained, but that, until the proper time came, he should talk no more about it nor even think about it. To make assurance doubly sure, he put out of the boy's way all the books that might give him further information on the subject. But books were not needed by this wonderful genius; the hint he had got was quite sufficient to start him on the right road. The father, noticing his son's regular absence at certain hours, followed him quietly one day into an old garret that had been given over to the children as a play-room. But no sign of play there now. The bare walls were covered with charcoal drawings of triangles, squares and circles, and there was the boy standing before one of them and so intently engaged in examining a diagram that he never heard his father's exclamation of astonishment. He was actually endeavoring to prove the 32d proposition in the first book of Euclid! The father, hardly able to speak, asked his son what he was doing. Ashamed of his disobedience and mortified at its detection, young Pascal could not answer for a long time, but at last he said he was trying to prove that the outside *corner* of the *three sider* was equal to the two opposite inside *corners*. By these terms he meant angles and a triangle. "How do you know that?" "It must be so since another

truth is so." "How do you show that other to be a real truth?" "It is self-evident." "What is self-evident?" Continuing his questions in this manner, the father was answered by demonstration after demonstration, until he came to the axioms, which he found had been composed by the child himself in clear philosophical language. Even a set of definitions this young Euclid had also written out for himself, calling a line a *bar*, a circle a *round*, etc., not knowing the regular geometrical terms for these abstractions.

The father, startled, frightened even, at such a revelation of genius, hastened to announce to a friend of his that his son had actually *invented geometry*, and asked him what should be done under the circumstances. "Let him follow his bent!" was the instant conclusion. Euclid was swallowed in a day or two without the least help; other authors presented very little difficulty; the boy took a regular seat at the *Conferences* and soon showed that he not only relished what was going on, but could contribute his own share towards the transactions. At sixteen he composed a *Treatise on the Conic Sections*, which Descartes always attributed to the elder Pascal, unable to imagine how a mere boy could have written such a profound work.

A few years afterwards, the father having been appointed by Cardinal Richelieu to superintend the revenues at Rouen, young Pascal, desirous to diminish the labor devoted every day by the clerks to long and tiresome calculations, invented an *Arithmetical Machine*, the first of the kind ever successfully attempted. But the intense application necessary to perfect such an instrument in the first place, and afterwards the worriment of teaching the men how to work it, had such an effect upon a constitution originally weak, that from this time till the hour of his death he hardly ever enjoyed good health for a single day. But for a long time his weakly body only slightly affected his glowing mind. Inventive and creative rather than learned, he continued giving new discoveries in his *Arithmetic Triangle*, his *Theory on Probabilities*, his *Equilibrium of Liquids*, and his famous *Experiments on the Weight of the Air* by which he settled forever the cause of the suspension of mercury in the

barometrical tube. He even originated the *Brouette* or Bath chair; the *Haquet*, a peculiar kind of dray; the *Hydraulic Press*, and other contrivances for diminishing labor which have been since more or less modified. He even gave the first idea to an enterprise realized in our own day as the *Omnibus*. Most of these scientific investigations were completed before he had reached his twenty-seventh year.

But cold, austere science, which he soon felt to be the result of a curiosity belonging to our lower nature, and therefore not essential for us to know, could not satisfy his longing aspiring soul. Duty, philosophy, religion and their vast revelations presented a more passionately absorbing study. His acquaintance while in Rouen with the Abbé Guillebert, a Jansenist, but a most eloquent and ascetic theologian, had given his mind a profoundly religious turn, which a narrow escape from death by runaway horses rendered indelible. He soon took up his residence in the monastery of Port Royal, where, though not a member of the Order, he continued until his death. Here he suspended, or gave up altogether, his scientific pursuits, devoting himself altogether to theology and the sacred scripture. Here too, where he had expected to find nothing but repose, friendship and balmy contemplation, fate forced on him the performance of a work that has rendered the invalid recluse's name immortal.

This monastery of Port Royal, mainly an educational establishment of great estimation among the French nobility, was directed by Antoine Arnauld, one of the most learned and estimable men of the day, but unfortunately inclined towards *Jansenism*, a doctrine which, however its supporters may explain it, certainly seems to be little in harmony with either the free will of man or the infinite goodness of God. Having drawn on himself by an indiscreet letter the severest attacks from the Jesuits of the Sorbonne and little confident in his own ability to reply, Arnauld prevailed on his friend Pascal to undertake his defence. Pascal, somewhat disposed towards the gloomy doctrine himself and indignant at the injustice with which he persuaded himself his friend had been treated, readily under-

took the task, devoting to it the whole of 1656 and part of 1657. The result was the famous *Provincial Letters*, purporting to be written by a Parisian to a friend in the provinces, and attacking the Jesuits with a humorous irony, a fierce energy, a home thrust, crushing, but pure and powerful style never surpassed, if ever equalled. Nothing like these *Letters* certainly had ever appeared before in the French language. Their success was instantaneous. Everybody turned Jansenist, because the polished pen of a great genius had for awhile overwhelmed the Jesuits with ridicule.

The extraordinary merit, however, of these *Letters* as pieces of composition, and they are read to-day with as much ease and relish as they were two hundred years ago, must not blind us to the unfairness and party spirit with which a careful reading will soon convince us they were animated. The Jesuits were blamed for acts done or opinions held by members of the Order long since dead, or forgotten, or too insignificant to be noticed, or who had been formally condemned and repudiated by the Society itself. Garbled doctrines of theirs were put forward as genuine, and charges brought against them for acts done of which the modifying circumstances were altogether omitted. But the public did not see this, or would not see it. It would have its laugh, especially at the Jesuits who were at that time anything but popular in France. They were blamed for every vile thing, from the assassination of Henry III., the massacre of Saint Bartholomew, the murder of Henry IV., and the Gunpowder Plot, downwards. "Everybody," says Voltaire in the surpassing style that Macaulay has imitated so well, "everybody tried to make the Jesuits odious; Pascal did more, he made them ridiculous. Molière's best comedies are not wittier than the first *Provincial Letters*, than the last Bossuet himself never wrote anything more sublime. But they all rest on a false foundation; the whole Society was adroitly attacked by attributing to it the extravagant opinions of a few Spanish or Flemish Jesuits; Dominican or Franciscan fanatics could have been unearthed just as easily; but they were not wanted, it was on the Jesuits alone that the attack was to be made. These *Letters* try to prove that the Jesuits had formed a plan to corrupt the morals of the human



race — a plan that no sect, no society ever has or ever can have entertained. But to be right was nothing ; the main point was to divert the public."

With the exception of this work, the production of extraordinary genius fanaticized by both party violence and headstrong attachment to a chimera difficult to recognize in this nineteenth century, Pascal and his writings command our decided wonder and admiration, not unmingled, however, with pain and compassion when we reflect on the terrible asceticism with which he tortured the remaining few years of his life. He would allow nothing even bordering on comfort to be in his room ; he made his own bed, and served his own table. His constant motto was : *no pleasure, no superfluity*. He mortified his poor exhausted frame with the most rigorous fasts, he even wore a girdle next his skin set with little iron points which he struck with his elbow as often as he felt himself attacked by the spirit of pride or vanity. He suffered so much from headache as to be often on the verge of distraction. He could swallow no liquid unless it was hot, and then only drop by drop, even the most nauseous medicines having to be heated. When the doctors compelled him to take sweet and delicate food, he swallowed it quickly for fear the taste would give him any pleasure.

Yet in the midst of all this suffering he undertook the grandest work that human genius ever conceived — the attempt to prove the divine origin of Christianity, by the light of natural reason alone. Being intended principally for geometricians, physicists, and men of science generally, who require or pretend to require the most rigidly logical demonstration for every assertion, he first undertook to show these learned men that the writer who attempted to instruct them in matters of faith could also instruct them in the most recondite mysteries of their adored science. He therefore challenged the mathematicians of Europe to some problems on the Cycloid which, so far, the most learned philosophers had given up as impossible. He even announced a prize for the successful respondent, waiting three months for a reply. Several competitors appearing after awhile, but the judges declaring none of their solutions satisfactory, Pascal then pub-



lished his *General Treatise on the Cycloid*, resolving all the problems completely, though he had written the whole book in no more than eight days.

But the great work he contemplated he never lived to finish. It does not seem to have been even sketched out in systematic order. All that we have of it is the famous *Pensées* (Thoughts), the stones, as it were, and many of them unhewn shapeless blocks, destined for the magnificent construction. Many of these *Thoughts*, by their depth, subtlety, and comprehensiveness, have astounded the world. Expressed with an originality the most active and a grace the most charming, in matter as well as in form they are characterized by an indescribable elegance as delightful as it is convincing. Many of them are also, no doubt, quite unintelligible, the greater and more painful our regret, therefore, that the wonderful soul which understood them all and could have arranged them in perfect symmetry was taken away before accomplishing even the groundwork of the sublime task.

His pains meantime gave him no relaxation. His final illness, lasting two months, began with a complete disgust for everything. Having no fever, his condition surprised the doctors and his friends, who, not believing him in danger, would not send for his confessor, though, knowing better himself, he eagerly asked for him again and again. His headaches, colics, and fearful pains, however, extorted from him no complaint. Charity indeed seemed to be his only thought. Seeing himself the object of the most assiduous care and attention, he insisted that a poor sick man should be brought into his house and treated with the same consideration, desiring, as he said, to have the consolation of knowing that somebody else was as well cared for as himself. Frightened by a swoon that nearly carried him off, his friends at last brought the priest; Pascal recovered sufficiently to receive the sacrament with a holy fervor and joy that moved the bystanders to tears. A few minutes after, he fell into a new convulsion from which he never recovered, expiring at the early age of thirty-nine, on the very year of Louis XIV.'s accession to the throne. "I love poverty,

were among his last words, "because Christ my lord has loved it; I love wealth too because it furnishes the means of succoring the distressed." He was buried in the church of St. Etienne du Mont, where his tomb is still to be seen.

"A genius," says Guizot, speaking of Pascal, "unequalled alike in the extent and the variety of faculties applied with the same splendid success to mathematics, physics, philosophy and polemics; disdaining all preconceived ideas; going fair and straight with admirable force and elevation to the very bottom of things; independent and free even in his voluntary submission to Christianity, which he accepts simply because he has weighed it, measured it, and sounded it to its lowest depths; he is too firm and too simple not to bow his head before mysteries of which he confesses himself to be profoundly ignorant. 'Had there been no darkness,' says he, 'man would never feel his weakness; had there been no light, man could never entertain a hope. So it is not only just but even advantageous to us that God is partly hidden and partly revealed, since it is equally dangerous for man to know God without knowing his misery and to know his misery without knowing God.' The lofty intelligence of this great man made him even recognize his own ignorance and be reconciled to it. 'We can easily feel,' says he, 'that there is a God, though we can never know what He is.'"

A few of Pascal's detached thoughts :

Vanity is so rooted in the heart of man that a common soldier, a scullion even, will boast of himself and have his admirers. It is the same with philosophers. Those who write would fain have the fame of having written well, and those who read would have the glory of being readers; I, who am writing, probably feel the same desire, and you, who are reading, possibly suffer from the same weakness.

Certain authors, speaking of their works, say, "*My book, my commentary, my history.*" It were better to say "*Our book, our history, our commentary,*" for, generally, there is more in it belonging to others than to themselves.

I lay this down as a fact: if all men knew what they say of each other there would not be four friends in the world.

Writers who frame antitheses by forcing the sense are like men who make false windows for the sake of symmetry. Their rule is not to speak justly, but to make pretty figures.

The utterer of *bon-mots* is generally an ill-natured character.

If a trifle affects us, a trifle also consoles us.

A man's merit is not to be measured by an occasional grand effort, but by his every-day actions.

Do you want the world to talk well of you? Never talk well of yourself.

Man is neither a fool nor an angel, but in wishing to pass himself off as an angel he shows himself to be a contemptible fool.

Note 57½ — PATIN — page 86.

HENRI JOSEPH GUILLAUME PATIN (1793-1876), famous Greek and Latin scholar, member of the French Academy, professor of rhetoric in the college of Henry IV., assisted Villemain as lecturer at the Sorbonne, where, in 1833, he succeeded Lemaire as professor of Latin poetry. His prose writings, particularly his *Studies on the Greek Tragedians*, reveal a pure and elegant style, and a profound knowledge of ancient literature.

Note 58 — LA FONTAINE — page 90.

JEAN DE LA FONTAINE (1621-1695), the most famous of fabulists, ancient or modern, was born at Château-Thierry, an old town in Champagne, on the Marne, in a house still carefully preserved. Too lazy or indifferent to learn anything in his boyhood, he grew up very ignorant, but at 19 or 20 he was sent to the Oratorian Fathers at Reims, entertaining possibly some idea of studying for the Church. Here he showed a taste for Latin and poetry but, anything like serious study proving too much for his indolent and pleasure-loving disposition, his educational career hardly lasted eighteen months. "If you knew the kind of a man he was," says the Abbé Olivet, "you would be less surprised at his quitting the seminary so soon than at his having ever entered it at all." Even laziness, however, and good-natured indifference could not keep a man of his genius completely ignorant. Hearing somebody recite an ode of Malherbe's on the assassination of Henry IV., he felt himself so transported by the verses that he got the poet's works all by heart and spent whole days reciting them in the woods. A relative named Pintrel, and a priest named Maucroix, a lifelong friend, taking advantage of this unexpected enthusiasm, encouraged him to read the earlier French writers, and particularly the Latin poets Horace, Virgil, and Terence. La Fon-

taine followed this advice, even translating and publishing one of Terence's plays; Greek he could never learn, but a careful translation of Plato, Plutarch and Homer, made afterwards for him by his friend Racine, enabled him to relish many of the moral and political maxims contained in the works of these writers. Italian literature also he cultivated at this time with some care, Machiavelli, Ariosto, and Boccaccio being his chief favorites.

His father, warden of the Waters and Forests of the Duchy of Bouillon, though proud of his son's poetical talents, had little confidence in poetry as a profession, and exerted his influence to have him appointed as his successor. La Fontaine accepted the position, but took such little interest in his duties that, after exercising the charge for thirty years, he was completely ignorant to the last of the meaning of even the commonest terms of forestry. When asked to marry, he showed the same heedless easy complaisance. His wife, though good-looking and intelligent, was soon as much neglected as the forests and waters. Everything like duty, in fact, all through his life he felt to be an intolerable chain. Even of his only son he almost entirely forgot the existence, leaving him altogether in the charge of strangers.

This poetic Rip Van Winkle, absorbed in the present, heedless of the future, neglecting his business, consuming his property—principal as well as interest, passing most of his time among his jolly companions in Reims, was leading a good-for-nothing life likely to end in complete obscurity, when an uncle of his wife's, named Jannart, who seems to have invariably entertained a great liking for his convivial nephew, invited him to Paris, and presented him to his friend and patron Fouquet, the famous superintendent of the finances. The rural tavern poet soon pleased this generous Mécænas so much that he gave him at once a pension of 1000 *livres*, demanding in return a poetical receipt every quarter, and counted him for seven years among his most intimate acquaintances. La Fontaine's muse all this time, however, seems to have been almost as idle and as indifferent as his life, most of her efforts being

hardly worth recording. But, on Fouquet's fall and disgrace, that La Fontaine had a grateful as well as a courageous heart was shown by the *Odes*, in which he implored the angry King to show some mercy to an unfortunate minister whose worst fault was too great a love for his sovereign. Jannart being exiled to Limoges on account of his connection with Fouquet, La Fontaine followed his friend to that comparative solitude. His chief amusement on the journey seems to have been writing letters to his wife, some of them singular enough, as the following extracts may show: "It is just midnight and we have to rise with the sun, but precious hour after precious hour I spend writing to you, I the favorite son of sleep and idleness. Talk of husbands sacrificing themselves for their wives! Show me one of them that can be compared to me! . . . But it is all for your good. If you like these letters, they may lead you on to something serious. At present you neither play nor work nor keep house, you just sit and read novels, except when a gossiping visitor drops in through charity. Some of these novels are anything but good reading, and even such as it is the stock often runs out; then there you are, high and dry. Now suppose these nonsensical letters of mine could get you interested in history, real history, of places and persons. The acquisition of such a habit would banish every tiresome moment from the rest of your life. Only, you know, you must never remember your history, still less quote it. To be a blue stocking is no credit to any woman; and to try to pass herself off as one is discreditable in the highest degree."

From Limoges he returned as soon as he could to Paris, but property and money troubles often brought him back to Château-Thierry, where he was fortunate enough to meet (1664) with a patroness who somewhat consoled him for the loss of Fouquet. This was the Duchess of Bouillon, the wife of the lord of the manor, a lady of remarkable wit, beauty, and great influence at court. It was probably by her that he was presented to the Dowager Duchess of Orleans, the King's aunt, who readily recognizing his genius gave him a residence in the Luxemburg Palace with the title and pay of gentleman in attendance. Here



he soon became known and greatly appreciated, not only by noblemen of the highest rank, but also by friends that he prized far more highly, and whose influence was far more beneficial. For it is no doubt to the influence exerted by such men as Molière, Racine, Boileau, and other distinguished celebrities of the time on the easy poet that we are indebted for his immortal *Fables*. Louis XIV. too, though in general far from approving of the character of some of his writings, saw the poet occasionally and made him generous presents. In 1665, the first volume of his *Tales* appeared; in 1668, he published the first six books of his *Fables*, dedicating them to the Dauphin, Bossuet's pupil. The second volume of his *Tales* was given to the world in 1671, and five new books of his *Fables* in 1678. His *Tales* were very popular in spite of their licentiousness, but it is his *Fables* that have made his name dear forever to old and young.

The death of the Duchess of Orleans in 1672 and the exile of the Duchess of Bouillon in 1680, would have thrown this helpless man once more on the world but for the timely intervention of another patroness, this time a Madame de la Sablière, who, taking pity on his desolate condition and being a great admirer of literature and philosophy, gave him shelter in her own house, where his friend Bernier, the celebrated philosopher and traveller, had already received a similar hospitality. In this joyous abode La Fontaine led the kind of life that just suited him; free from money troubles, free from house troubles, he could see his company, polish his poetry, talk, be silent, eat, drink, blunder or philosophize with perfect impunity.

In company this great writer was very unequal; with friends he was sometimes the gayest of the gay, but not unfrequently the stupidest of the stupid, his fits of absent-mindedness leading him into innumerable absurdities. His friends' name for him was the *Bonhomme* (simpleton). What La Bruyère, who knew him well, says of him is well known: "The man appears coarse, heavy, stupid; he can neither speak, nor tell what has just passed before his eyes; but put a pen in his hand, and he becomes the model of narrators; he makes everything speak, trees, animals, stones, and speak with grace too; you find noth-

ing but airiness, elegance and delicacy in his works." Louis Racine, son of the poet, says something similar: "He never contributed anything of his own to the conversation. My sisters, who had often seen him when children at my father's table, remember him still as a man not over clean in his habits and very tiresome in his language. Frequently he never spoke a word at all; but all at once he would start on Plato, and then he would never stop." Such testimonies, though of course much exaggerated, are no doubt well founded. "Only for your wit, M. de La Fontaine," cried Madame de la Sablière to the poet one day, "you would be extremely stupid!" Anecdotes showing the simplicity and originality of the man are as plentiful about La Fontaine as about Goldsmith; we shall give the first we meet. In 1691, at the first representation of his own opera *Astrea*, seated in a box behind some ladies who did not know him, he annoyed them considerably by crying out every moment "what wretched stuff!" At last the ladies, out of all patience, could not help saying: "Sir, won't you please keep your observations to yourself! The piece is not so bad. The author is a man of wit, the famous Monsieur de La Fontaine." "My ladies," he replied, "the piece, I tell you again, is vile trash. And as for the La Fontaine that you are crying up so, he is an ignoramus. I am La Fontaine myself, and I ought to know!" Leaving the theatre after the first act, he entered a neighboring tavern and fell asleep in a corner. An acquaintance soon woke him up, asking him in astonishment why he was not at the representation of his own opera. "I have been there," answered La Fontaine, yawning, "but the thing was so stupid that I could stand no more than the first act. You Parisians are wonderfully patient." One evening in a mixed company his son, by this time a fine intelligent young man, was presented to him by a mutual friend who took care to emphasize the relationship. "Delighted to make your acquaintance, sir!" said the absent-minded *Bon-homme*, moving off to another part of the room. Some time after this, noticing that a young man saluted him with great respect and never recognizing his son, he was seen to gaze after him with mingled interest and perplexity, muttering to himself,

"I have certainly seen that young fellow somewhere!" In spite of such eccentricities, however, it must not be supposed that the best judges did not recognize and fully appreciate the peculiar genius of the great *raconteur* in that age of genius. "Gentlemen," said Molière one day, when the company had been unusually merry over some incredible fatuities of La Fontaine, "you wits may give yourselves what airs you please, but I tell you the *Bonhomme* will outlast the best of us!" In 1684, he was enrolled, after some difficulty, in the French Academy, Louis XIV. withdrawing his opposition only on the poet's express promise to lead henceforward a more regular life and to employ his pen only on becoming subjects.

In the same year he lost his patroness Madame de la Sablière who, retiring from the world, passed the rest of her days in a hospital, devoting herself altogether to the care of the sick and the performance of other good works. This was a severe blow to the overgrown child, now in his sixty-fourth year and less able than ever to take care of himself. The chief amusement of his old days seems to have been his regular visits to the Academy, though as one friend after another dropped off, even that was often a pain. His former patroness, the Duchess of Bouillon, hearing of his loneliness, invited him to pass the rest of his days in her palace in England, and poor La Fontaine thought so seriously of the proposition that he took up a grammar to learn the English language. From a step so disagreeable to himself and so disgraceful to France he was dissuaded, however, by the illustrious Fénélon, his great admirer, and at this time preceptor to the young Duke of Burgundy, the heir presumptive. Calling on the old poet one day with his royal pupil, he praised his *Fables* as a delightful and useful book, which he hoped he would continue. A generous present from the young prince easily putting all thought of England out of the flattered poet's head, he set himself with delight to the task; the twelfth book of the *Fables* was the result, a work, though composed in his seventy-second year, fully equal to the others in freshness of imagination, and vigorous grace of style.

But however it might be with the mind, the body began to

grow feeble, and at last the old poet fell dangerously sick. His friends became alarmed. Though at no time a free-thinker or a scoffer, he had been always too indifferent, unrestrained, and self-indulgent to make any pretensions to a sense of Christian morality. A priest went at once to see him and recommended him to read the New Testament. "I have read it," answered the *Bon-homme*; "I assure you it is an excellent book." Delighted to find his task so easy, the Abbé called the sick man's attention to the great scandals occasioned by his life and some of his books, and to the necessity of making serious atonement. Though greatly surprised at these terrible charges, he would not argue with his adviser, but simply asked what was to be done. "Burn that bad play you have just finished," said the priest, "and make a public confession of your sorrow for having written those immoral stories." "I will burn the play readily, my Father, but you astonish me by calling my tales immoral." The priest insisting and the argument waxing warm, the poet's old housekeeper thought proper to interfere with the well-known words: "Quit fashing him, Father; the creature is too simple to be wicked; our good Lord would never have the heart to put such an innocent in hell." The dispute could end only in one way; the dying poet promised everything, made his confession, and received the viaticum with the most fervent dispositions. This time, however, he did not die, but his conversion was sincere and most complete. On his first appearance in the Academy after his recovery he promised to devote the rest of his days to such subjects alone as might somewhat repair the injury done by his light and frivolous pen. And he kept his word. If anything could atone for the previous irregularities of his life and make some amends for the heedless scandals of some of his works, it would be the really recollected and serious manner in which he passed his last two years on earth.

These two years, soothed by kindness and consoled by friendship, were by no means unpleasant. His end was like the sage's that he alludes to in *Philemon and Baucis*:

Rien ne trouble sa fin, c'est le soir d'un beau jour.



An old friend, Hervart, touched at the lonely condition of the invalid poet, concluded to take care of him for the rest of his days, and started to make the proposition. He met La Fontaine on the street moving along with difficulty. Their dialogue is often quoted. "My wife wants you to take up your quarters at our house, La Fontaine," said Hervart. "There's where I was going," replied the *Bonhomme*. Though his health was not good, he was incessantly occupied, and full of cheerfulness and hope. Towards the end of 1694 he writes to his old friend the Abbé Maucroix: "I hope we shall both reach our eighties, and that I shall have time to finish my hymns. My work keeps me alive. What do you think of my translation of the *Dies Irae* herewith enclosed? I have another grand idea on hand in which you will be able to give me invaluable assistance. But I must not tell you what it is until I shall have made some headway." This work, however, probably translations of the Scriptures, he did not live to finish. A short time before his death, in his seventy-third year, he writes to this same old friend: "You are greatly mistaken if you think me suffering in mind rather than in body. Our common friend thinks so too, or says he does, probably to give me courage. But he also is mistaken; it is not courage I want. I assure you that your oldest and truest friend has not a fortnight to live. For the last two months I have not gone out of doors, except to take an odd stroll to the Academy, by way of amusement. On my return yesterday, I was seized with such a weakness in the street that I thought my last hour was come. Oh my dear friend, dying I do not mind, but remember I am shortly to appear in the presence of God! You know how I have lived. Perhaps before you receive this, the gates of eternity will have closed on me forever."

La Fontaine was buried near his old friend and companion Molière in the cemetery of Saint Joseph, whence, after some disturbance by the Revolution, their ashes were transferred to the famous cemetery of Père La Chaise, where their humble tombs side by side are still to be seen. Of his life or genius little need be said. His *Fables* are as well known as the French language. In reading them we excuse every failing of the man, his weaknesses,



his abstractions, his incongruities, his blunders. We think only of his good nature, his wit, his humor, his candor, his simplicity. And these are the qualities too that we find so irresistible in his writings, combined with peculiar originality, lively imagination, occasional poetic fervor, very often extremely good common sense.

What our author says of him (pp. 104, 105) shows his thorough appreciation of La Fontaine as a poetic Fabulist, and it is by no means pitched in too high a key.

Note 59 — SAINT SIMON — page 91.

LOUIS DE ROUVROI (1675-1755), Duke DE SAINT SIMON, peer of France, scion of a noble family tracing itself back to the days of Charlemagne, accomplished courtier, and author of the most famous *Mémoires* that have ever appeared, was held over the baptismal font by the royal hands of Louis XIV. and Maria Theresa of Austria, the king and queen of France. Educated with much care in his father's house under a mother's watchful eye, and becoming a proficient scholar in Latin, German, and History, when still a youth he entered the army, but, after serving with some distinction, at his father's death he gave up the field for the court, either finding preferment too slow or deeming himself better qualified for diplomacy than war.

His new career, however, at first does not seem to have given him much satisfaction. In fact at no time did he feel himself sufficiently appreciated, and through his whole life he impresses us with the self-consciousness of a disappointed man. He could not be happy. Great as were his talents, they bore no proportion to his vanity; if the highest position could hardly satisfy his soaring ambition, the comparative obscurity in which he passed his youth could not help souring his temper. Having nothing better to do, he began writing his *Mémoires*. The period he particularly treats of being towards the end of Louis XIV.'s reign, when most of the great characters that had rendered it illustrious were either dead or withdrawn forever from public life, the colors he employs are naturally rather dark and the

portraits often anything but flattering. Feeling keenly the neglect with which he was treated by his royal godfather, who certainly had troubles enough otherwise to engross his attention, he never omits an opportunity of giving the old king a sharp dig. It must be acknowledged, however, that in spite of his cynicism, he shows himself conscientiously just and faithful towards many of the meritorious men of the period. His portraits of the young Duke of Burgundy the heir presumptive, of the illustrious Fénelon, of Catinat, of Vauban, of Beauvilliers and others distinguished for their virtues and grand qualities, are stamped with a love of truth and an honest respect for morality. And even when he turns his attention to men of a different character, such as Vendôme, Dubois, and the Duke of Orleans, his sketches, with all their bitter and dark delineations of vice, can hardly be called overcharged or in any respect untrue.

His intention being not to publish the work until long after the death of every person it speaks of, he spares nothing; he writes exclusively for history and posterity; he can hardly be said to entertain any positive hatred towards his contemporaries; and his means for arriving at the truth and discovering the hidden springs of motives were certainly unequalled. Still the general reader must never forget that the Duke wrote under peculiar circumstances which could not help somewhat warping his judgment. He is often too bitter, too cynical, and too suspicious of any other motive than sordid self-interest being able to sway the human heart, to be always trustworthy. He has his palpable prejudices and his palpable antipathies. His ideas, too, of aristocratic rights and privileges, ideas which he maintained through life with fanatical infatuation, often cloud an observation otherwise of extraordinary keenness. These *Mémoires*, as may be supposed, are exceedingly popular (though thus far the English reader must satisfy himself with an abridgment). Not that their style is a model of elegance, finish, or correctness; on the contrary it is occasionally rough, ungrammatical, sometimes even obscure. But is never slovenly. Like that of a brilliant short-hand writer, it is rapid, energetic, full of

new and sparkling images, and generally of a wonderful ease. Saint Simon, in fact, appears to avoid purposely everything like care and finish in his composition ; the proud Duke would consider it a degradation to be taken for a literary man ; his ambition is to be recognized as a nobleman amusing himself by talking to the public. He entertains them with everything, and with everything well, politics, finances, war ; his descriptions of war operations, in fact, reveal the true soldier.

After the death of Louis XIV., he found great favor with the Duke of Orleans, whom he considerably aided in obtaining the Regency until such time as the young King Louis XV. should become of age. But though the Regent made him one of his council and often consulted with him in difficult matters, he often displeased him by disregarding his sensible advice. Very soon too the haughty Duke got himself involved in a serious quarrel with the Parliament and the legitimated children of Louis XIV. Both these parties, he considered, were conspiring to ruin the peerage, one by presuming to equal it, the other by pretending to override it. The middle classes and their representatives particularly, he treated with sovereign contempt, and in a pamphlet on the subject he had no hesitation in reminding the Parliament that few of its members belonged to the *haute noblesse*, and that most of them, indeed, were mere *parvenus*, objects of intense dislike to his patrician soul. A rejoinder from the Parliament, though probably unauthorized and the production of some jester who would say anything to raise a laugh, made a good deal of fun at the time and stung the sensitive Duke to the quick. "Saint Simon a nobleman?" it asked, "every one knows to the contrary. It is not so long ago since one of his cousins was groom to Marshal Schomberg's widow. Descended from the house of Vermandois? Does he expect us to believe that the fancied resemblance between one of his quarterings and the coat of arms of that illustrious family proves any such descent? The little Duke's vanity is crazy enough to swallow anything. In his genealogy he actually makes one of his ancestors, a crook-backed German lawyer, a member of the noble house of Bossu!" Only a man of the most overweening vanity could

feel hurt by such silly stuff as this. But that is precisely what the haughty Duke was. Marmontel says of him with great truth: "In the nation Saint Simon sees nothing but the nobility, in the nobility nothing but the peerage, in the peerage nothing but himself." To the parliamentary squib he actually took the trouble to write an elaborate *Reply*, in which he triumphantly demonstrated his descent from the house of Vermandois by the most incontrovertible arguments.

In 1721, the Regent sent him to Spain as ambassador, to ask the hand of one of the Infantas for the young King Louis XV., and to conclude a marriage between the Regent's daughter and the heir presumptive to the Spanish throne. Though the first alliance never took place and the second was anything but a happy one, Saint Simon was treated with great distinction, returning to France as Grandee of Spain and bearing the order of the Golden Fleece for his eldest son. Finding, however, that his adversaries, Dubois and Bourbon, had now become more powerful than ever and that the legitimated princes had been restored to many privileges of the blood royal, and probably also disgusted with the scandals of a licentious court, he soon broke off relations with the Regent, and, on the death of the latter (1723) retired forever from public affairs. He spent the last 32 years of his life quietly on his estates in La Ferté, putting his *Mémoires* into order and giving them the final touch.

After his death several manuscript copies of the famous work remained a long time in possession of his brother, the bishop of Metz, but, at the suggestion of several powerful families afraid of scandal, they were at last seized by the government and removed to the public archives, where Voltaire, Marmontel, and only a few others were allowed to examine them. In 1791, a partial liberty granted to the press allowed an imperfect edition to appear in Strasburg, but it was not until 1829 that Charles X., by restoring the MS. to the family, allowed Saint Simon's grandson to give the complete and authentic work to the public.

Taken all in all, it is the most curious and important document that can be consulted by the student of the later years of Louis XIV.'s reign. It is a comedy of a hundred acts, where



the players, most of them by this time grown old and rather tired of their long parts, pass before us in their natural colors, appearing as they do oftener behind the scenes than on the glittering stage. Nobody is presented as an ideal type of this, that, or the other class. We are in the midst of a vast and well-lighted gallery, where every portrait preserves its own name, its own costume and its own physiognomy. Here and there, no doubt, the perfection of the likeness may be questioned, but the expression given to every countenance is original, striking and peculiar. These *Mémoires*, in short, hold the same relationship to history that the family sitting-room, where everything is unaffected, natural, and therefore always true, holds to the grand parlor, where everything is premeditated, arranged for show, and therefore often false.

Note 60—**BUFFON**—page 92.

JEAN LOUIS LECLERC, better known as the Count de BUFFON (1707-1788), famous writer and naturalist, received a careful education in the Jesuit college of Dijon, where he made himself remarkable not so much for brilliant success as for perseverance, steadiness, and capacity for protracted labor. Assured of an easy competence, while hesitating between his own preference, mathematics, and the law, to which he was advised by his father, a councillor of the Burgundy parliament, he happened to make the acquaintance of a young English nobleman, Lord Kingston, travelling on the continent with his tutor, a man of ability, good sense, and mathematical turn of mind. Easily obtaining permission to make the grand tour with his new friends, he visited Italy and Switzerland in their company; and it was probably the contemplation of nature in her varied aspects of beauty, majesty and terrific sublimity, afforded by this journey of eighteen months, that decided young Leclerc's resolution of devoting the rest of his life to the study of the physical sciences. He accompanied his friends even to England, where, the better to learn the language and at the same time to pursue his favorite studies, he translated from the English the Rev. Stephen Hales's *Vegetable Statics*. Translating also about the same time Sir



Isaac Newton's *Methodus Fluxionum* from the Latin, he presented both manuscripts to the French Academy of Sciences, which so highly appreciated them as to publish them in quarto at its own expense.

Becoming a member of this Academy in 1733, he presented it with occasional papers on experiments of his own in physics and rural economy, such as, *Tanning with Oak Bark*, *The Effects of Cold on Vegetable Growth*, *The Effect of Stripping off the Bark in Hardening Wood*, etc., the most important of his experiments being a confirmation of Archimedes's famous exploit of setting fire to distant objects by means of burning mirrors. Up to this time, in all these pursuits he seemed to be animated by nothing more than a vague desire of instruction and glory, but his career was finally determined in 1739 by his nomination to the directorship of the *Jardin du Roi*, now the *Jardin des Plantes*, the famous Parisian Botanical and Zoölogical Gardens united into one. The biological sciences henceforward became the great employment of his life.

His studies by this time having thoroughly familiarized him with most of the observations and experiments made by travellers and naturalists, with the truths they had unquestionably discovered, the fallacies they had undoubtedly disproved and the questions still warmly disputed, having also learned by experience the difficulty of the ordinary reader in coming to any definite conclusion at all regarding results attained by different methods, unconnected and often apparently contradictory, Leclerc now conceived the idea of uniting all these scattered results into one great harmonious whole, and thus giving to the world at large a popular and intelligible idea of a science which till then had existed only in the brain of a few philosophers. In other words, he was the first man that ever undertook to make a grand *Digest* of Natural History. The task was a vast one, and certainly too great for the genius of any one individual, but the scientific enthusiast did not shrink from it. Associating with himself his friend and companion Daubenton, the cool and cautious naturalist, for the treatment of the purely scientific questions, he reserved for himself the general description of

the animals, the painting of the grand phenomena of nature the enunciation of the bold hypotheses, in a word, all the start ling, thrilling, eloquent and poetic portions of the work. Ten years did the two friends work together diligently and silently, gathering materials, studying and testing facts, tracing relations, and making corrections; at the end of that time, in 1749, the first three volumes of the famous *Natural History* were presented to an astonished and delighted world.

Few works ever achieved such instantaneous success. Whatever may be its scientific value at the present day, it certainly at that time formed an epoch in the study of the natural sciences. Everybody thought it his duty to become a scientist in order either to sustain or combat the new views. The *Theory of the Earth*, however, gave much less satisfaction, even to his most enthusiastic admirers, than the *History of Man*, in spite of some obscurities, hasty conclusions and frequent contradictions that disfigured the latter work. His bold hypotheses regarding the cosmogony, indeed, are of a nature that man cannot verify, will never be able to verify. A comet striking off portions of the sun, these vitrified and incandescent portions becoming planets which, cooling by degrees, become at last the home of organized beings, these organic molecules, this material mechanism trying to replace the instinct of animals, etc., all these are mere flights of fancy, and can never be anything else. "Nevertheless," as Cuvier says, "Buffon has the merit of being the first to point out clearly that the actual condition of our globe is the result of a succession of changes, of which we can find the evidence to-day; and it is he who first drew the observation of all investigators to the phenomenon by which these changes can be unravelled."

As to his merits as a writer, however, there can be but one opinion. For breadth and grandeur of views, for vigorous and stately march of ideas, for noble gravity of expressions, and for sustained harmony of style on befitting subjects, few writers have ever equalled Buffon. In spite of a little turgidity or pompousness now and then observable, he succeeds in clothing every detail with an enchanting grace; the unavoidable aridity

of some of his subjects he succeeds in varying or concealing by moral reflections always natural and interesting, often profound; and his pictures of the grand scenes of nature are masterpieces of power, truth, and impressive eloquence.

Twelve volumes more appeared at pretty regular intervals until 1767, when, Daubenton refusing to co-operate any more, because Buffon allowed the bookseller to publish a cheap edition, in which the anatomical and scientifically descriptive part had been abridged or omitted altogether, Buffon was obliged to write the next nine volumes, *The History of Birds*, with the assistance of two friends of a less scientific turn. Here, therefore, we lose in rigorous and severe anatomy, though perhaps we gain in order, Buffon, in spite of himself, being obliged to recognize the necessity of a more logical method and of a stricter observation of the radical distinction between the several genera. He labored alone at the *History of Minerals* (1783-1788), a work necessarily weak and imperfect, as he knew little of chemistry or the late discoveries in mineralogy. 1788 is the date of his *Epochs of Nature*, his *chef d'œuvre*, for, though the new theory he attempts to sustain is just as unsubstantial as the former, in no other of his works does his genius show more sublimity, his imagination more majestic exuberance, or his style more vigor, harmony, and irresistible fascination.

Long before this his reputation had been widespread and firmly established, the most distinguished men of all nations expressing their admiration, and crowned heads lavishly showering the proofs of their esteem. He had been made member of the French Academy, and honorary member of most of the learned societies of the world. His works had been translated into the principal languages of Europe. Louis XV. had raised him to the rank of nobility, with the title of Count de Buffon, and Louis XVI. had ordered his statute to be erected in the *Jardin des Plantes*, bearing this inscription, *Majestati Naturæ Par Ingenium* (a genius equal to Nature's majesty). Yielding at last to the attacks of a painful disease, the stone, from which he had suffered many years, he gave up unwillingly the further prosecution of the great work at which he had been engaged for

fifty years, and having devoted the remaining days of his life to enlarging and embellishing his other great work, the *Jardin des Plantes*, he died a quiet Christian death, at Paris, in the eighty-first year of his age.

Buffon had a handsome person and a noble presence; his manners were courtly and elegant but kind and conciliating; instead of being hurt by criticism, he often warmly thanked his critic for pointing out his errors. Wits have attempted to amuse the world by the well-known story of his never sitting down to write unless in the most fashionable court dress, with frills, lace ruffles, powdered wig, etc., but all this is probably exaggerated, and, in any case, it is a very slight fault to find with the great and untiring genius that first rendered natural history popular by making it intelligible.

We cannot help presenting the reader with an extract from Buffon's admirable discourse on STYLE, pronounced at his reception in the French Academy and alluded to by Legouv  . It contains his celebrated phrase.

To write well, we must at once think well, feel well, and express ourselves well that is, we must have wit, soul, and taste. Style presupposes the exercise of all the intellectual powers and their closest union. It is ideas alone, however, that form the foundation of style, harmony of words being a mere accessory, and depending on the sensibility of our organs. To avoid dissonances, we need simply have some ear; and to imitate poetic cadences and oratorical turns, we need simply have practised and perfected this ear somewhat in reading the poets and studying the orators. But imitation never creates; harmony of words, therefore, can never form the foundation or the tone of style, and it is often met with even in writings destitute of ideas. The tone of style is its suitability to the nature of the subject; never forced, it springs of its own accord from the matter in hand, and depends nearly altogether on the elevation of the point to which we have lifted our thoughts. If our ideas are broad, comprehensive, far reaching, and if their subject is at the same time of an inspiring nature, our tone will rise to the same elevation; and if while sustaining it at this height, our genius is able to impart a strong light to every object, to add beauty of coloring to strength of outline, in a word, if we are able to represent every idea by a lively and sparkling image and to form every group of ideas into a harmonious and spirited picture, our tone becomes not only lofty, but even sublime.

Well written works alone descend to posterity. Vast extent of learning, interesting singularity of facts, surprising novelty even of discoveries are by no means certain passports to immortality. If these works are composed on some insignificant object, if they are written without taste, without nobility, without genius, they will certainly perish, for learning, facts and discoveries are easily transferred elsewhere, and even profit by being written by an abler pen. All such things are external to man; STYLE



IS OF THE MAN HIMSELF. Style can never be transferred, nor stolen, nor changed; if it is elevated, noble, sublime, the author will be admired forever; for it is truth alone that is durable and even eternal.

Note 61 — DE MUSSET — page 93.

LOUIS CHARLES ALFRED DE MUSSET (1810-1857), dramatic writer and poet of a style most charming and unique, son of the author of an interesting *History of Rousseau*, was educated in the College Henry IV., Paris, where he became intimately acquainted with the Duke of Orleans, Louis Philippe's eldest son and the father of the present Count de Paris. Restless and versatile in the extreme, he tried in turns medicine, law, banking, painting, and at last settled down to letters. In his sixteenth year he had written a tragedy, and in his eighteenth had received a prize for the elegance of his Latin dissertation. A great admirer of Victor Hugo, and embracing the doctrines of the Romantic school with as much ardor as he afterwards showed in renouncing them, he published a book of *Poems*, which, in spite of their unbridled and erotic character, attracted much attention as indicative of decided poetic ability. In 1833 appeared his charming *Proverbs*, perfect gems of French literature, many of which have been played with great success (*A Caprice, No Swearing, No Jesting with Love, The Door must be Shut or Open*, etc.), though generally never intended to be acted. In 1836 his prose romance, *Confessions of a Child of the Century*, probably told the story of his own life. New *Tales* and *Stories* followed, extorting unqualified admiration for their pure and nervous style, but still severely criticised for their ideas and sentiments. A new collection of *Poems*, published in 1850, was hardly equal to his earlier works, which made Heine say "He is a youth of a glorious past!" In 1852 he was elected member of the French Academy.

Through the influence of his friend the Duke of Orleans he had been appointed librarian of the ministry of the interior in the reign of Louis Philippe, and Louis Napoleon had made him librarian of the ministry of public instruction, still, possessing no personal estate of his own and decidedly luxurious in his



habits of living, he was never out of money difficulties. Incapable of restraining his mania for pleasure, he drained the cup of enjoyment to the dregs, and died of premature old age.

If De Musset's life is a painful picture of the passionate, intensely restless, and licentious youth of his day, his *Poems* too leave anything but a pleasing impression on the mind of the general reader. They taste like peaches and opium. They are a mixture of the bitterest irony and the sweetest poetry, of the profoundest depth and the shallowest frivolity, of delirious joy and heart-bleeding despair. It may, however, be acknowledged that, though in his earlier poems a fool-hardy materialist, towards the end of his mortal career, when somewhat chastened by long and painful suffering, he seems to hesitate a little between the mockery of a skeptic and the enthusiasm of a believer. This is shown especially by his *Espoir en Dieu*, a characteristic poem, by no means free from irreverence and blasphemy, but evidencing some moral aspirations expressed with a soothing melancholy grace full of charm. His prose has all the clearness, finish and elegance of Voltaire, a master whom he unhappily took for his model in too many respects.

With all his faults it is not at all surprising that for awhile De Musset was the most popular poet of young France. Without the grandeur and harmony of Lamartine, or the power and exuberance of Victor Hugo, he surpasses both these poets in spontaneous ease, passionate expression, and perfection of language. He often reminds us of Byron and Heine, but with a difference. He has more art than either. With less commanding intellect than the Englishman, he has more heart, sincerity and tenderness; with less depth than the German, he is often grander, nobler, and always freer from affectation. All three unfortunately were equally paralyzed by the same weakness of character. Continually lifting towards heaven their gleaming eyes, they seemed to glory in tottering feebly through the upas valley of self debasement. Then, unwilling to see that wrong *must* bring punishment, that life is only decay, and too cowardly to bear its ups and downs bravely like the rest of us, they fall to crying like children and do all they can to make the world

miserable by their frantic tirades against fate, and death, and particularly against our great, good, and incomprehensible God.

What good can such poetry do mankind? What good has De Musset's poetry done France? Good! His insolent *Rhin Allemand* has done her more harm than a million of German bayonets. The German song is poetic, and can offend nobody. Where is the son of Vaterland who does not feel the blood boil in his veins at De Musset's reply, a tolerable translation of which we borrow from some newspaper?

Why, we have had it, your German Rhine!  
 It has served to rinse our glasses,  
 The boasting ballad you think so fine,  
 Will it heal the scar that passes  
 Where our charging horse spilt German blood like wine?

Yes, we have had it, your German Rhine!  
 There is a wound that is open ever  
 Where Condé in triumph rent the vine—  
 Green robe of your sacred river;  
 Shall the son not follow the sire of the conquering line?

Yes, we have had it, your German Rhine!  
 What availed your German virtue  
 When the Cæsar of France, that soul divine,  
 With his eagle talons hurt you?  
 Where fell the bones of the men whose loss ye pine?

Yes, we have had it, your German Rhine!  
 If you quite forget your history,  
 Your girls remember—their eyes would shine  
 Of their glee they made no mystery  
 As they brimmed our goblets with your weak white wine

If it is yours, this German Rhine,  
 Why, lave your livery in it;  
 But don't keep up such a boastful whine!  
 In our Eagle's fatal minute  
 Your myriad ravens pecked at his sunny eyne.

Let it peacefully flow, your German Rhine!  
 Reflecting tower and steeple—  
 But keep within a moderate line  
 The yell of your frantic people,  
 Lest ye wake our mighty dead from their rest divine.

Note 62 — LAMARTINE — page 94.

ALPHONSE M. L. DE LAMARTINE (1790-1869), illustrious poet, orator, statesman, and historian, member of a distinguished family in Burgundy, passed his childhood in the quiet seclusion of the castle of Milly, near Macôn, where his father, the Chevalier de Lamartine, a most devoted royalist, endeavored to give him some sort of an education during the stormy years of the Revolution. His books were few, *Telemachus*, *Paul and Virginia*, an illustrated Bible, and *Jerusalem Delivered*, forming the chief stock of the family library, but they were almost the only books he ever read more than once. His extraordinary genius, in fact, owed nothing to books, nothing to labor, nothing to study; he wrote his poetry, made his speeches, announced his plans, composed his histories without more effort than it costs a tree to give out leaves or water to run down hill. "I sing," he says himself, "as man breathes, as the dove coos, as the wind sighs, as water murmurs in its flow." Except arithmetic, the only branch of education that he ever tried to study but which he could never master, he knew everything by instinct. Intellectually he was born an improviser, as the rest of us are born tall or short, fair or dark.

His mother, having little faith in domestic education, sent him, in his twelfth year, to the parish priest's house to learn Latin, but the Abbé Dumont, a poor disciplinarian, allowed his pupil to spend more months on the mountains with the goat-boys than days in the class-room with his books. His uncle, the Abbé de Lamartine not liking this state of things, sent him to a school in Lyons in 1805. But the noisy life of a city college being insupportable to such a nature, he ran off one morning with a companion, and tried to find his way home. Hunger attacking the boys, they entered an inn for breakfast. "This is Friday," says young De Védél, "we must ask for eggs." "My mother often told me," says young Lamartine, "that travellers are not bound to abstain. No omlet, landlord, but a nice chicken; and set the table for two." "Set the table for three!" cries a well-known voice — that of the schoolmaster, who soon brought back the

fugitives. But the parents, hearing of the escapade, took him from Lyons and sent him to the Jesuit College of Belley, not far from the Lake of Bourget in Savoy.

There he did little more than draw horses on his slate and scribble over his books, his delicate health exempting him from punishment, yet there he remained three years, the despair of his teachers, the puzzle of his schoolmates, as great an idler in the playground as in the study hall. It was there, however, that he formed a life-long friendship with De Verieu and De Vignet, nephews of the De Maistres, and names well known to readers of his poetry.

A month before leaving the college forever, he suddenly took it into his head to compete for the prizes. The workers, the steady fellows, laugh in their sleeves on examination day as they see the dawdler scratching away at his French discourse and his French dissertation, and trying to put in order the bits of paper on which he has scrawled his Latin translation and his Latin theme; but they laugh on the other side of the mouth when they hear young Lamartine's name called out for all the first prizes. This was his way through life — everything by spurts, nothing by labor. Inability to correct, to examine, to weigh, was the great blot on his character. Had he only had the patience to do full justice to his first inspirations, whether in poetry, religion, or politics, he would have been the first man of his century, perhaps of any century.

What shall he do at Milly? He tries gardening, but a month's labor gives him a surfeit of horticulture. He tries hunting, but the sight of the first hare he wounds brings tears to his eyes. He takes the poor animal home, puts its broken leg in splints, feeds it and pets it morning and evening, and renounces hunting forever. What shall he do? Scramble over the hills? He has all the hills by heart, and he soon returns home, tired and listless. He takes up a book, the first at hand, and in three minutes he is fast asleep. "Assuredly," says his father, the Chevalier, gazing at him in despair, "an officer is all we shall ever make out of our Alphonse."

One day, however, he did not fall asleep over his book, a

translation of Byron's *Childe Harold*. The anti-religious, anti-monarchic sentiments of the poem shocked him, but the brilliancy of its genius attracted him. Taken up and flung down twenty times, he read the book at last from cover to cover and dreamed of it all night. To escape the haunting suggestions of the poem, he rises next morning at daybreak, starts off for the hills, climbs the steepest slopes and returns towards evening, weak and feverish. His mother, alarmed, puts him to bed, gives him a warm drink, but, as soon as she leaves the room, he jumps up, seizes pen and paper, and in an hour writes his *Ode to Byron*. He was cured.

The ode is read next morning for the sisters, for his mother; all five go into ecstasies over it and insist on his reading it for his father; the Chevalier sees but little merit in the lines; they are very different from the poetry he is accustomed to: "Delille's, for example." "Delille!" cries the young poet irreverently, "why, he has little genius, no imagination." "Our Alphonse," interrupts the Chevalier turning to his wife, "is worse than lazy, he is presumptuous." But the ode has aroused a storm in the young man's soul hard to allay. It has given him a glance at his destiny. He feels unhappy; the calm, sleepy life of Milly oppresses him; he chafes as if in a cage. The house all at once seems dull and the hills uninteresting. But how can he reach the mountains? The Chevalier is severe, money is scarce, the rich legacies which are to make the poet wealthy are still far off. His mother, however, slips her little savings, a purse of forty dollars, into his pocket; his eldest sister gives him her gold watch; the other sisters, while packing his valise, contrive to hide their pocket-money among his collars and handkerchiefs. He starts for Savoy. Adieu, fireside! Now for mountains, lakes, avalanches, Italy, the sea, freedom, poetry, romance, the memories of which are to enchant the world ten years later.

His return to the paternal mansion was but a preparation for a new departure. After a summer in Tuscany, he spent the winter of 1811-12 at Rome, in the dwelling-house of an old painter, seeing nobody and totally immersed in study and con-



templation. 1812 and 1813 he passed in Naples, particularly in that delightful part of the shore

Whence the faint breath of luscious orange groves  
Swoons on Sorrento's silver-fretted sea.

In 1814 his parents recalled him to France, where he was appointed to a position in the King's body-guards; Napoleon's return drove him to Switzerland, but Waterloo soon restored him to a position which his strongly royalist sympathies made him endure for awhile in spite of his dislike of a military life. Paris, however, as he says himself, he could never relish. "It affects me, it wearies me; oriental I was born and oriental I shall die. Solitude, deserts, seas, mountains, horses, nature to admire, a wife to love, a friend to talk to, long repose of body devoted to deep aspirations of soul, then violent and adventurous periods of action—that is my ideal; a life in turns poetic, religious, heroic—or nothing." The greater part of the next two years was spent in Savoy, where his intimate acquaintance with the great Catholic writer, Count Joseph De Maistre, just returned from Russia, by confirming him in his religious opinions, exercised a highly salutary influence over his effervescent imagination. The desire to see a lady, often alluded to in his *Méditations*, brought him back to Paris in 1818, where by this time he had begun to obtain some renown, the most exclusive *salons* hailing him as the rising poet of France. The days he devoted to study and composition, the evenings to pleasant intercourse with his friends. One of these, the young Duke de Rohan, afterwards Cardinal, presented him to Madame de Saint Aulaire, whose apartments were the headquarters for Academicians, statesmen, orators, writers—in a word, the centre of the elegant, poetic and literary world of Paris. It was here that the young poet, taking a leaf out of his portfolio, read aloud the little poem of *The Lake*. "Angels of heaven, what music!" cried Madame de Saint Aulaire. The enthusiasm of the rest of the company was equally great. To realize this enthusiasm we must remember how weary refined ears had by this time become of the hand-organ poetry of the Empire, on

which the Restoration had not as yet made the slightest improvement.

Some time before this, Lamartine had seriously thought of giving his poetry to the world, but he could find no publisher. The poet tells us, in *Raphael*, his experience on the subject with M. Firmin Didot, the great printer and publisher, himself a scholar and a poet. "With a beating heart I went up stairs, but remained a long time outside the door, not daring to knock. Some one came out. The door remaining open, I had to enter. Monsieur D.'s face was as calm and as close as an oracle's. He made me sit down, and pulling my manuscript out from under a pile of paper, 'I have read your verses,' said he; 'they are not without talent, but they are without study. They resemble in no respect what is found and what is expected among our best poets. It is hard to say where you have got the language, the ideas, the images of your poetry. It can't be classed definitely with any kind known thus far. A great pity, for it is decidedly harmonious. I would advise you to renounce these novelties so contrary to French genius and sure to end by exiling it. Read our masters, our Delilles, our Fontanes, etc. These are the poets the public relishes. Resemble some one of them, if you want to be recognized and read. I should give you a bad advice in counseling you to publish this volume; I should render you an evil service in publishing it at my expense.'" But at last an obscure publisher, named Nicolle, consented to print the *Méditations*, and they appeared in 1820. The success of the work was great, especially among the Catholic and aristocratic families. Even the critics, while noting its occasional negligences, could not withhold their admiration for its freshness, its originality and its frequent phrases of unquestioned classic finish. But it was the women and the young men in particular that showed themselves especially enthusiastic over these harmonious and sweetly melancholy inspirations of a soul suffering and delicate, but consoling itself by revery, the contemplation of nature and the adoration of Infinite Being. "There is real greatness in this volume," says Sainte-Beuve; "it is wonderfully well composed without showing it; Romance

slips in to fill up whatever space Religion left unoccupied ; the weeping elegy wails beside the triumphant canticle." It was soon acknowledged throughout the world that France had a new poet, one worthy of the name, one enriching her poetic literature with a new and charming style of his own.

Such success instantly threw open every door to Lamartine. The government made him brilliant offers. A diplomatic career best suiting his love of travel and his desire for leisure to continue his poetic studies, he was appointed *attaché* to the legations successively of Florence and London, and finally he was sent as secretary to Naples. It is said that whilst moving about one evening at a masked ball in Italy he heard a tender and melodious voice murmuring in his ear a passage from his own *Méditations* : " Perhaps the future has in store for me a return of the happiness that I now deem lost forever ; perhaps in the crowd some soul, that I at present know nothing of, will once more understand my heart and respond to it." It was the voice of a fair young English lady, Miss Marianna Birch, rich and well connected, who took this method of expressing her interest in the poet. The acquaintance thus renewed soon ripened into mutual love and in a few months resulted in a happy marriage.

The *New Meditations*, published in 1823, fully sustained the reputation of the former, *The Stars*, *The Preludes*, *The Crucifix*, *Bonaparte*, in particular, being pieces of the highest poetic excellence. He spent five years at Florence as French minister and whilst there published the *Last Canto of Childe Harold*, in testimony of his admiration for Byron, whom, however, he could not equal in that style of poetry. This poem, too, came very near having serious consequences. In a severe apostrophe to Italy he had alluded bitterly to her apathy and resignation ; the two following lines in particular :

*Je vais chercher ailleurs, pardonne, ombre romaine,  
Des hommes et non pas de la poussière humaine,*

(Elsewhere, pardon me, O shade of Rome ! elsewhere I must seek *men* and not human dust,)

hurt the susceptibilities of a Colonel Pepe, a Neapolitan revolu-

tionist at that time residing in Florence, who sent the French minister a challenge. Lamartine, who loved Italy and would be the last in the world to insult an unhappy nation, having no alternative left but to fight, was so severely wounded that for a few days his life was despaired of. In 1829 he published his *Religious Harmonies*, a work in which his genius showed itself richer and deeper than ever, proving him, as was said at the time, to be a most brilliant and able defender of the throne and the altar. In this same year he was recalled to France to be offered the ministry of foreign affairs, which, however, he would not accept, preferring the plenipotentiaryship to Greece. He was elected to the French Academy in 1830, the illustrious Cuvier welcoming him with marked kindness and eloquence. He was travelling in Switzerland when the Revolution broke out.

Attached to the fallen dynasty, he immediately renounced his diplomatic career; but, in spite of his legitimist sympathies, he had always maintained towards the Restoration a dignified and independent attitude, never showing any servility, never offering to play the part of a court poet. He could, therefore, without exposing himself to the charge of ingratitude or versatility, take his place in the ranks of those who regarded the Revolution as an accomplished fact and the white flag exiled forever. In a pamphlet, *Rational Politics*, published in 1831, he already lets us see that he has little confidence in royalty of any kind and that he considers the dynasty of July as a mere transition. He entreats the new government not to place confidence in itself, but in the nation; not to create a peculiar interest for itself amidst the general interests of the country, not to concern itself so much about its *existence* as its *mission*. "If the government understands this mission," he says, "and devotes itself, not to its own interests, but to the disinterested salvation of the nation, to the broad and solid establishment of free and rational order, it will triumph over all obstacles, it will create what its evident mission is to create, it will last as long as necessary things ought to last, until they have accomplished their work — itself a transition to another order of things more advanced and more perfect. But if the government does not understand itself, if it



does not turn to due account, for the benefit of liberty and humanity in general, the fugitive moments allowed to it; if it does not see that a broad, straight and unimpeded road is open before it, along which it can carry minds, laws and facts to a point from which no retrograde movement is possible; if it deems *itself* of any account, if it stops or turns aside, it will perish, and whole ages may perish too before the same opportunity occurs again." This pamphlet attracted so much attention among the thinkers of the day that, believing the moment was come when it was every citizen's duty "to think, speak, act and take sides with the family of families, the nation at large," he allowed himself to be nominated for deputy at Toulon and Dunkirk. The common people knew very little of him at this time. But his defeat probably gave him less disappointment than pleasure. It left him free to undertake what he had long coveted, a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

To sleep under the palms where Jacob had slept, to mourn on the hills where CHRIST had mourned, to roam over the land sanctified by His blessed feet, such had been the dream of his childhood, which circumstance now permitted him to realize. He also hoped that the journey would restore the health of Julia, his only child, the idol of her parents, and then seriously threatened with consumption. The latter expectation, unfortunately, was not destined to be fulfilled. At the very time that her health seemed completely reëstablished by the genial air of the Mediterranean, the charming child suddenly expired after a two days' illness, in the arms of her parents, at a country house in the neighborhood of Beyrout. The account of this journey, which he has given us in *Le Voyage en Orient*, is a work of world-wide fame, full of elevated thoughts on poetry, politics, and religion, though perhaps more interesting to a poetic or reflecting mind than to the curious lover of adventures. He travelled like a prince by sea and land, the Turks and Arabians universally saluting him as the *Frankish Emir*. The most interesting episode in the journey was his conversation with Lady Hester Stanhope, Pitt's eccentric niece, the "Queen of Lebanon," so celebrated for her knowledge of the occult sciences and



her disdain for conventionality. From this conversation we are tempted to give some extracts, hoping curiosity will send the reader for full information to the book itself.

STANHOPE. . . . Sit down and chat: we are already friends. LAMARTINE. . . . You know not who I am. S. . . . I am in possession of a science, lost in Europe, but still existing in the East. I can read the stars. . . . I have seen you but a few minutes—Your name I cannot tell, but I know you as well as if I had lived an age with you. . . . Would you like me to foretell your destiny? L. . . . I should think it were profaning the prerogatives of the Deity to ask the revelation of hidden secrets from his creature. In matters of futurity I believe only in God, liberty, and virtue. S. Believe what you please. . . . You are one of those ardent and well-intentioned men whom God needs as instruments in the marvellous works he is soon to accomplish. Do you believe the reign of the Messiah has arrived? L. I am a Christian. S. (*with some slight ridicule*) A Christian! . . . What are your reasons for believing in Christ? L. . . . There are two luminaries given to mankind; one enlightens the mind, but it is liable to controversy and doubt, and it often leads me to error and mistake; the other illuminates the heart, and never deceives, for it is at once evidence and conviction, and to us poor miserable mortals truth is only conviction. . . . I believe in Christ because he has brought into the world the holiest, the most fertile and the most divine doctrine that ever radiated over the human understanding; so celestial a doctrine cannot be the product of deception and falsehood. . . . This is why I am a Christian; and this is all the religious controversy I ever have with myself. With others I have none. A man can have nothing proved to him unless he believes it already. S. But do you find the social, political, and religious state of the world so well ordained as not to need the Messiah that *we* wait for, whom *our* hopes already see? L. . . . In the confusion of man's beliefs, in the tumult of his disordered ideas, in the vacuity of his heart, in the depravity of his social state, in the repeated shakings of his political institutions, I see the necessity for a Healer, and I am convinced that He must be divine. But in this Messiah I do not see a new incarnated Christ. He has appeared already and has nothing more to confer of wisdom, virtue, truth. But I see His Holy Spirit, still, as He has promised, continually aiding mankind, and revealing to them, according to time and need, what they ought to know and do. . . . In *Him* I believe, I hope in Him, I wait for Him, and, more than you, my lady, I invoke Him. . . . S. (*smiling*) Believe what you will, you are not the less one of the men I have been looking for, who have to play a great part in the work now in preparation. You will soon return to Europe—Europe is doomed—France alone has a great task to fulfil. You will take a great part in it—what, as yet, I know not. . . . You speak like a man that puts too much faith in the human *will* and too little in the irresistible dominion of *destiny*. . . . I hope you are an aristocrat. You look like one. L. You mistake, my lady. I am neither aristocrat nor democrat. I have seen both sides of the medal of human nature, and have found that one is as rough as the other. . . . I am an advocate exclusively of what will ameliorate the whole of mankind, whether they be born at the top or the foot of the social tree. . . . I do not believe that either aristocratic or democratic institutions have the exclusive power of perfecting humanity. That power rests only in a divine morality, which is the offspring of a perfect religion. The civilization of nations lies in their religious faith. S. That is true; yet I am an

aristocrat in spite of myself. . . . You will agree that, if there are some vices in aristocracy, there are at least exalted virtues connected with them, as an atonement and counterpoise; whilst in democracy I see many vices, often the lowest and most hideous, but in vain do I seek exalted virtues. L. . . . There are vices on both sides, but in the higher classes these vices have a brilliant appearance, whereas in the lower classes they are shown in all their nakedness. . . . In the one, vice is a choice, in the other often a necessity. . . . S. . . . I hope you are not to be counted among those Frenchmen who take pleasure in exciting the stormy populace against all the dignities that God, nature, and society have set up; who pull down the edifice in order to build with its ruins a pedestal for their own base envy. . . . L. . . . I am one of those who, while they honor all those above them in the social system, do not despise all those below, and who hope or dream to call all men, without reference to their position in arbitrary arrangements, to the same light, liberty, and moral perfection.

Lamartine was recalled from the East by the intelligence that the inhabitants of Bergues, near Dunkirk, had elected him as their representative in the Assembly. He immediately took his seat and continued to be a public man for eighteen years. In 1834 the inhabitants of Mâcon, jealous of seeing their illustrious countryman representing another city, gave him their votes, but Lamartine decided in favor of Bergues, which had re-elected him. But in 1837, the Mâconnese having once more unanimously renominated him, unable to resist this mark of respect and admiration, he withdrew with regret from Bergues, which had re-elected him for the third time. For the next twelve years he was one of the most popular representatives in France. His home was at Saint Point, not far from his ancestral Milly.

In the Assembly, too independent to join either party, naturally conservative and indisposed to factious opposition, he aided the government whenever he thought his assistance was necessary. "The first duty of a government," said he in one of his early speeches, "is to live; whether good or bad, it represents something more necessary than liberty itself—order, public peace, security of life, security of property. These we have a right to demand from it, but, in its turn, it has the right to demand from us the means to live. For my part I shall never higggle with the government in a moment of danger. But, that moment once passed, order once reëstablished, I shall demand a strict account of the power with which it had been temporarily intrusted. I shall say: What have you done to prevent the

return of such a fatal necessity?" Next year he handled with little mercy the tricky politicians who, having upset the legitimist government in the name of liberty, did not hesitate to commit every petty tyranny for the benefit of the new dynasty. "It is not your business," he cried, "to muzzle the press, to put off every useful reform, to render useless a revolution accomplished by the people, to present to Europe the demoralizing spectacle of men employing the most sacred hopes of humanity as arms whereby to conquer political offices, who persecute with recriminations and insult the very flag that has led them to victory, blaspheming what they have adored, adoring what they have crushed, and corrupting the people by trying to show that in politics there is neither truth nor falsehood, neither virtue nor vice, and that the world belongs to the greatest knave, or the most daring adventurer."

These extracts explain sufficiently why he remained so long in a state of political isolation; no party seeking any advantage for itself could count on him as a permanent ally. Politics, however, though unable to make him neglect his poetry, prevented him from bestowing on it all the attention necessary for complete success. The poetic Muse is a jealous mistress. *Jocelyn*, which appeared in 1836, though a touching poem, full of beautiful images, and replete with Christian morality, is too often prolix and unequal to deserve unqualified admiration. In *An Angel's Fall*, 1838, the same defects reappear, somewhat redeemed, however, by occasional passages of extraordinary power and grandeur showing an abuse rather than any decay of the poetic faculty. Even his friends complained, but in 1839 he gave the world his last verses under the name of *Contemplations*, and in the preface announced his resolution henceforward to make poetry subservient to politics. It is not surprising then, that of all his poems, his first, *The Meditations*, is generally considered to be his best.

In spite of his renunciation of poetry, the part Lamartine took in politics was not as yet very active, though, as he still held himself aloof from party, his eloquence made him a power respected, if not feared, in the Assembly. In the Eastern ques-

tion, 1840, he held somewhat peculiar views: the two Turkeys should be divided, he said, into provinces or protectorates, which should be made over to the different European powers, Russia receiving Constantinople, France Syria, England Egypt, etc. In 1843 he broke off finally with the conservatives as too inert, too selfish, too dead to the glory of the nation. "Convinced," said he in his memorable discourse, "that the government is wandering farther and farther from its true principles, which should have nothing in view but our happiness at home and respect abroad; convinced that every step France has taken for the last eight years has been a step backward; convinced that the moment for flatteries and compliments is gone forever, I here offer my conscientious vote against the address, against the spirit animating it, against the government accepting it; I shall combat it, with regret but with firmness, in its past, its present, and perhaps in its future." But, though such speeches as these were sinking deeply into the minds of men, the voters at large never seemed to read them. Guizot's bureaucracy had an easy triumph. The elections of 1846 gave his Cabinet a considerable majority, composed principally of public functionaries. The opposition, finding argument of no avail and election a farce, was nonplussed for a while, but even the wildest demagogues hardly dreamed of starting a new revolution.

It was at this dangerous moment that Lamartine's famous *History of the Girondins*, appearing as a serial in one of the Parisian journals, astounded all parties alike by his open sympathy with democratic principles. In all probability it was this work that hurled Louis Philippe from his throne. France had become tired of revolutions; Lamartine's "History" made a new one possible. "See what he did," says Sainte-Beuve. "Unwittingly he set a trap into which both himself and the nation fell. A true poet, he undertook to write history. Impossible task. His brilliant imagination gave a coating of glory, harmony, and light to the dark and hideous pictures of the Revolution. He concealed their horror; he gave them prestige; over this reeking quagmire of blood and garbage he threw the



grandeur of the Milky Way and the splendor of the rainbow." "By his magic evocation," said another author, "he summoned up the mighty shades of the heroes and martyrs of '89 and '93, pointing with silent reproach at our feebleness, dispelling our apathy, and making us ashamed of our cowardice."

The opposition, never dreaming to what extremities this excitement of the public feeling could be aroused, and resolving to make use of it to upset the ministry, organized *reform banquets* all through the departments. Lamartine, who belonged to no fraction of the opposition, and who liked Thiers even less than Guizot, had a banquet for himself at Mâcon, where, in very clear terms, he laid before his electors the approaching fall of the House of Orleans. "If Royalty," said he, "deceives the hopes which the revolution of 1830 placed less in its nature than in its name; if it isolates itself in its Constitutional elevation; if it does not incorporate itself entirely in the minds and the legitimate interests of the masses; if it surrounds itself by an electoral aristocracy rather than by the entire people; if, without openly opposing the will of the nation, it corrupts this will, and purchases, under the name of influence, a dictatorship the more dangerous as it has been bought under the cloak of the Constitution; if it allows us to descend, as we are descending surely and steadily, into the tragic depths of corruption; if it allows the nation and posterity to be afflicted and humiliated by the dishonesty of the public officers, it will fall! This royalty be convinced of it, will fall, not in its own blood, like that of '89, but in its own trap. So, after having our revolutions of liberty, and our counter revolutions, we shall have the revolution of the public conscience, the revolution of contempt!"

Guizot was too blind to see the approaching storm, or too improvident to prevent it. He stubbornly remained in office, though he saw his splendid majority of office-holders dwindle down to 33. A banquet, forbidden by the authorities, and several times deferred, was finally fixed to take place February 22, 1848; but at a late hour on the 21st a proclamation was issued to interdict it. The opposition decided at once not to attend the banquet, but to impeach the ministry. What happened next is



well known. Barricades were thrown up by the excited populace in different parts of Paris on the 22d. On the 23d, the National Guard having joined the insurgents, the Guizot ministry resigned, a Thiers ministry was formed, and everything appeared to have come to a quiet end. But all that night the secret societies, unwilling to lose the opportunity that governmental mismanagement had afforded them, were at work quietly, but very effectively. The first news Louis Philippe heard on the morning of the 24th was that all Paris was in a state of insurrection; the troops, disgusted with contradictory orders, were doing little or nothing by way of resistance; the National Guard was fraternizing with the insurgents; the Thiers proclamations were torn down; the Palais Royal was taken and plundered by the populace; and that it was their shouts that were now heard ringing, loud and menacing, only a few squares off.

Louis Philippe, utterly bewildered, abdicates in favor of his grandson, the young Count of Paris, and starts for England. The Duchess of Orleans, leading her children by the hand, enters the Chamber of Deputies, into which a rough crowd of National Guards and insurgents have already burst, headed by Ledru Rollin, and crying, "down with the venal majority!" and "let us have a provisional government!" Odillon Barrot's powerful speech in favor of the Duchess as regent is rapturously applauded by some, but violently hissed and hooted at by others. Shouts, yells, and uproar fill the hall. It is a moment big with the fate of France. Suddenly LAMARTINE'S name is heard. Deputies and Democrats alike hail him with applause as he takes his way to the tribune. The howling assembly becomes as still as death. His words are listened to as intently as if they were decrees of fate.

"Gentlemen," he begins, "I participate as profoundly as any man in the twofold sentiment pervading this assembly at the sight of one of the most touching spectacles that the annals of humanity can present—that of an august princess sheltering herself in her affliction, beneath the innocence of her children, fleeing from a deserted and invaded palace, and throwing herself into the sanctuary of popular representation. But I have

a sense no less lively of the respect due to the people. . . . I cannot suppose that a momentary acclamation, extorted by an honorable emotion from an assembly melted to tenderness by a natural feeling, can establish a stable and undisputed government over a population of thirty-six millions. I know that what one burst of popular enthusiasm may create another may destroy. I know that, in order to escape a recurrence of the crisis in which we are placed, it is of consequence to have, not an ephemeral government, but a stable, a national, a popular, in short, *an immovable order of things*. How are we to arrive at this immovable basis? *By going to the very foundations of the people and the country, by extracting from national rights the great secret of universal sovereignty, whence issue all order, all liberty, all truth.* We want a government which shall put an end to the terrible and unsuspected state of things existing for years between the different classes of our citizens, hindering our mutual recognition, and preventing our harmonious union. . . . I demand that we instantly constitute a *conditional government!*”—He is still speaking when a new crowd of desperadoes, bursting into the hall, puts an end to further discussion. But the dictum has been pronounced. The monarchists, on whom Lamartine's speech has fallen like a thunderbolt, slip away in silent terror. The Duchess and her children escape, not without danger of losing their lives. Lamartine himself is seriously threatened by insurgents who mistake him for an “enemy of the people.” But, brave as a lion, and compelling obedience by his magnetic presence, he has old Dupont de l'Eure carried to the deserted chair, and, selecting six such names as he considers best for the proposed provisional government, he hands them to him for nomination. They are all ratified with volleys of applause, his own, the third on the list, with the wildest. Then, hurrying to the Hotel de Ville, the new government enters at once on its duties, proclaims the Orleans dynasty fallen, a republic established, and demands the adhesion of the army and the civil authorities. Proclamations signed by well known and respected names instantly restore tranquillity. The threads of government, so rudely snapped, are rapidly re-

united. February 24th, beginning with a monarchy, ends with a republic.

But this is not the republic desired by a dangerous portion of the populace of Paris. The twenty-fifth dawns, the most dangerous day France has ever encountered. Self-appointed sentries have guarded the city without much trouble, and, soothed by the magic word *republic*, startled Paris has rested pretty well. But the Terrorists and the Communists, indignant that they are not represented in the new government, have been preparing their plans. Early in the morning, armed with every kind of weapon, they surround the Hotel de Ville and throng the neighboring streets, waving the *red flag*, and tearing down the tri-color wherever they find it. Numbering 30 or 40 thousand men, they soon burst the doors of the Hotel de Ville, but the great majority remains outside, singing the *Marseillaise* and rapidly lashing itself into fury. "Who are the men," cry its orators, "that have surprised and plundered our government? Let us depose and expel them! We must make our republic ourselves! Down with the flag of royalty, reminding us of our slavery and its crimes. Hurrah for the *Red* one, the symbol of our freedom!" Towards noon the square is densely packed and the windows and roofs are hung with red. The savagest characters in the world are to be found in that howling mob; once it breaks out, where will its violence end? No police is there, no army. Nothing like an officer, except a few polytechnic students, one to a thousand. If Paris, France rather, was ever saved by man, that man was Lamartine. Five times he tries to make himself heard from the balconies, but the roaring multitudes drown his voice. At last, mounted on a straw-bottomed chair, where he was held by a few devoted friends, surrounded by an infuriated mob, his earnest accents command attention and by degrees silence prevails.

He begins by soothing the assemblage by a hymn upon the victory, so sudden, complete, and unexpected even by the most ardent lovers of liberty. He calls God and man to witness the admirable moderation and religious humanity exhibited by the people in the combat and in the hour of triumph. He rekindles

the sublime instinct that had thrown the people still armed, but obedient and disciplined, into the arms of a few men who had devoted themselves to calumny, exhaustion and death for the safety of all.

“That is what yesterday’s sun has seen !” he continues. “But what do you want to-day’s sun to witness ? A different kind of people, only still more furious from having fewer enemies to combat, distrusting those very men you had yesterday put in office ; curtailing their liberty ; humbling their dignity ; despising their authority which is in fact your own ; substituting a revolution of vengeance and punishment for a revolution of humanity and fraternity ; and commanding your government to raise in token of concord the standard of mortal hatred between citizens of the same country ! That terrible *Red Flag* has been raised sometimes, in moments of hot blood, as a scarecrow to enemies, but once that the fight is over, it should be instantly lowered, in sign of reconciliation and peace. I would rather hoist the *black flag* which in besieged cities floats like a winding sheet, to distinguish those neutral edifices which are consecrated to humanity and which even the enemy’s bullet and bomb must respect. Is it your wish that the banner of your republic should be more menacing and sinister than the flag of a bombarded town ? . . . You have the power to offer violence to your government ; you have the power to command it to change the banner of the nation and the name of France. But if you are so ill-advised and so obstinate in error as to impose upon it the republic of a party and the flag of terror, the government, I am well assured, is fully determined to perish rather than to dishonor itself by obeying you ! As for myself, never shall my hand sign such a decree ! Even unto death shall I reject this banner of blood ; and *you* should repudiate it still more decidedly. For, the red flag you offer us, saturated in our own people’s blood, has only gone around the Champ de Mars, whereas the tricolor has made the circuit of the *world*, with the name, and the glory, and the liberty of our country !”

History shows no more prodigious triumph of eloquence in ancient or modern times than was witnessed on this occasion.



Electrified by the orator's burning words, or stung to the quick by his taunts, the furious mob rends the air with shouts of *Vive la République!* so fiercely menacing that the cowed Terrorists, fuming with wrath and disappointment, quietly slink away, lowering the odious flag, but revolving plans for its undoubted triumph at the next opportunity.

This was the day of Lamartine's greatest glory. The defeat of the red flag turned all France Republican, and conciliated the sympathies of Europe. If his superhuman exertions on this day had cost him his life, his name would be treasured for ever as that of the most illustrious martyr of true liberty that the world has ever seen. But he was too much of a grand poet to be a wise statesman. Unwilling to face the dreadful alternative of exterminating the secret societies with fire and sword, and probably exaggerating their numbers and importance, he thought he could hold them in check by allying himself closely with Ledru Rollin, their representative and nominal ruler. This unnatural union he tried to explain by comparing himself to a lightning-rod silently drawing off the terrible power it cannot avert, but the mistake was fatal for the success of the Republic. The moderate party, losing confidence in its ability to maintain order, surrendered it with little hesitation to Louis Napoleon. At the elections for President in 1849, Paris gave fewer votes to her preserver Lamartine than to Raspail the conspirator! The *Coup d'état* of 1851 finally disgusting him with politics, he retired altogether from public life, and devoted the rest of his days exclusively to literature.

Unfortunately the production of books had now become a matter of unavoidable necessity. His princely splendor had plunged him deeply in debt, and to a relief from this oppression every moment of his life was now devoted, though now upwards of sixty. His industry was indefatigable, but works produced under high pressure, seldom have the savory flavor of spontaneous growth. His *Confidences*, his *Tales*, his *Histories*, his *Biographies*, his *Familiar Entertainments*, etc., did not much improve his fortune, though he expended more genius, talent, and labor in these ephemerals than would be required for two



or three works sure of immortality. His friends' attempts, however, to raise a national subscription in his behalf, not proving successful, the city of Paris presented him with a country-seat in the Bois de Boulogne, and in 1867 Napoleon III.'s government allowed him a life interest in a capital of \$100,000. In 1868 the Emperor offered to discharge unconditionally his debts, amounting to \$120,000, but this generous offer the old Republican poet refused to accept. The death of his wife, a most estimable woman, in 1863 had made him very unhappy and fretful, and this with his other troubles, no doubt helped to cast a melancholy cloud over the closing years of his life. An imperial decree prescribed that his funeral should be celebrated at the expense of the State, but the poet having left express orders that he should be buried in his own estate at Saint Point, his dying wishes were religiously complied with.

What good has Lamartine done for France? He has chastened her poetry by inventing a poem which combines the intensest passion with the highest morality. For sixteen years he has given the world the example of an eloquent and enlightened statesman, never thinking of himself, but incessantly battling for the advancement of true liberty by infusing the spirit of Christianity into the legislation of his country. Finally, at a most critical period, without a soldier, without even a policeman, by his courage, his magnanimity, and his entrancing eloquence, he saved the nation by dispersing the Red Republic, that afterwards, when it had got the upper hand, murdered the archbishop and sixty-four priests, blew up the chief buildings of the city, laughed Thiers and his parliament to scorn, and that cost MacMahon nearly three months' incessant fighting, at the head of 150,000 men, to subdue it!

Note 63—VICTOR HUGO—page 94.

COUNT VICTOR MARIE HUGO (1802 —), poet, novelist, artist, dramatist, orator, statesman, essayist, satirist, one of the most celebrated and best known men of the century, was born at Besançon, eastern France, in the same year that Bonaparte was declared Consul for life. From his very birth he inherited

quite opposite tendencies. His father, of a noble Lorraine family of a few hundred years' creation, entering the revolutionary army as a private soldier, had signally distinguished himself by his valor on the Rhine, in La Vendée, on the Danube. In Italy, where he helped to capture and hang the notorious brigand *Fra Diavolo*, he attracted the attention and won the confidence of King Joseph Bonaparte, who, when removing to Spain, carried General Hugo along with him, and made him governor of several provinces. His mother, the daughter of a Breton shipbuilder, a royalist in soul and marrow, had been hunted by the revolutionary soldiers through the *Bocage*, in company with Madame de la Rochejaquelein and other heroines of La Vendée. Her sufferings and experiences during this deathless episode must have filled her with such a hatred against the Revolution and its abettors that we cannot understand why she married Citizen Hugo at all. Even the children's earliest infancy shared in the restless activity of these stirring times. "Before life," as the poet himself says, he traversed Europe, the first three years of his existence being spent in Elba, and the next two in Paris. Thence taken again to Italy, the children with their mother returned to Paris in 1809, the year that the father followed King Joseph to Spain. Victor remained in Paris two years, trying to learn Latin from an old priest, and also from a proscribed general, La Horie, hiding in his mother's house. The tragic fate of this general, Victor's godfather, who was discovered and put to death for complicity in Malet's conspiracy, powerfully strengthened the royalist ideas which the mother had already planted in the boys' tender minds.

In 1811, the General holding a high position in Spain, the family removed to Madrid, where, however, Victor and his brothers could study no longer than one year at the College of the Nobles, the threatening aspect of affairs driving the mother and children once more back to Paris. It is to this short stay in Spain, however, that some have attributed not only the poet's early love of Spanish literature, but also his somewhat Spanish cast of character, his seriousness, his stateliness, his pride, his sensitiveness, so often degenerating into stubbornness, if not

positive sulk. The Empire came to an end whilst Victor and his brother were finishing their classical education in a private school kept by a M. Delarivière, and General Hugo, separated at last from his wife by political as well as domestic troubles, sent the boys to a mathematical school to prepare them for the Polytechnic, expecting them to become soldiers.

Young Victor studied his mathematics, but he liked poetry better. His early wanderings through Europe, which would have spoiled a less studious intellect, had taught him as if by instinct many things that school-boys can never learn, especially developing his poetic talent. At the age of fifteen, the poem he sent to the French Academy, to compete for the annual prize, was of such remarkable merit that the judges would have unanimously awarded it the crown, had not the author, perhaps from a little vanity, innocently announced his age. The consequence was that, either unwilling to believe such a work to be a boy's production, or imagining he had mentioned his age to influence their decision, they refused the premium. Everybody exclaimed against the injustice, but one of the results of the dispute was that his father, by this time convinced that his son was better qualified to handle the pen than the sword, excused him from presenting himself at the Polytechnic, and allowed him to pursue his poetic studies in peace. He won some prizes offered for poetry at the floral games of Toulouse, but the appearance of Lamartine's *Méditations* in 1820 stimulated him to more serious and persevering effort. His first collection of royalist and religious poems, entitled *Odes and Ballads*, was given to the world in 1822, and its success was instantaneous. Châteaubriand saluted him as the *sublime child*, and Louis XVIII., touched by the vigorous style in which the young poet had chanted the glories of chivalry and the lilies of France, ordered him to be paid a yearly pension of 3000 francs. But Hugo's next work, in prose, *Hans of Iceland* (1823), though captivating the majority by its power and strange originality, repelled every reader that was indisposed towards the monstrous and horrible. *Bug Jargal*, another prose tale, appearing in 1826, showed a still greater falling off in delicacy and taste.

This fondness for dwelling on ghastly scenes of blood and death and brutal cruelty has been the besetting sin of his life. This too is the reason why readers of coarse tastes, the immense majority, whose palates must be tickled by the hottest stimulants, read him with the greatest pleasure. The fact is, his irregular education, while doing much to exalt his fancy, had done little to chasten or improve his taste. The dreaming boy had been wandering over the splendors and horrors of Europe, instead of working at school, and playing with his companions; a few years later his opening imagination took greater delight in modern Spanish, Italian, German and English literature, than in the master-pieces of Greece and Rome, or in the deathless productions of the age of Louis XIV. Exuberant in his genius, and dimly conscious of his creative power, he chafed beneath rules of art and dictates of criticism, regarding them as cumbersome trammels, rather than wise and safe guiding-reins. Royalty, too, had probably been never more than a sentiment, and his mother's death was the first blow towards successfully severing the link binding him to the old monarchic and religious school, which, about this time, became known as the *Classic*, to distinguish it from the new school called the *Romantic*. Of this school, as already stated (page 224), the dramatist Lemer cier had been really the father, but Lamartine's fascinating *Méditations* having now made it extremely popular, especially with young France, a new paper, the *Globe*, was started expressly to define and support its principles. Its articles being full of life, and especially of novelty, the *Globe* was extensively read, its doctrines proving especially ensnaring to young poets, artists, and dramatists. Young Hugo in particular, embraced the new doctrines with such enthusiasm that he soon became their most vigorous exponent, the great Panjandrum indeed of the new mysteries. The chief principles of the two schools seem to be somewhat as follows: the Classic School holds that nature should be represented in poetry, in art, on the stage, etc., not as she *really is*, but *idealized*, and, whether in good or in ill, *improved* into what our imaginations readily tell us she *ought to be*. The Romanticists claim that in the representation of



nature our only ideal should be the *True*. Art, fettered by no rule, by no tradition, by no criticism, should be allowed to express nature *as it finds her*, in whatever order it may please, with whatever terms it may please. What right, they ask, have we to substitute our fleeting conventionalities for the majesty of reality? Truth to nature should be our only standard. In our pictures of nature why exclude the horrible, the grotesque, or even the trivial? If we admit only the beautiful, the perfect, the sublime, what pretensions can we make to giving a representation of *truth*?

Something like this at least was said by Victor Hugo himself in the preface to a third volume of his *Odes and Ballads* in 1826. "What is really true is always true. Thought is a virginal and fertile soil, whose productions should be allowed to grow spontaneously, and even at hazard. *Regularity* is one thing; *order* another. Regularity is merely human; order is simply divine. The poet's only model should be, nature; his only guide, truth; his only books, Homer and the Bible." But it was in the preface to his first tragedy, *Cromwell*, 1827, that he boldly flung the new banner to the breeze, and stoutly nailed it to the mast. "In creation we see the ugly existing beside the beautiful, the deformed beside the graceful, bathos beside pathos, the ridiculous beside the sublime, evil beside good, shade beside light; why then should the artist endeavor to surpass God? Is nature mutilated nature improved? Is the harmonious to be sought at the expense of the complete? The time has now come for poetry to take a decided step, a step, like the earthquake shock, destined to change the face of the world. She will show the shadow as well as the light, the grotesque as well as the sublime, the body as well as the soul, the animal as well as the spirit; but she will show them as Nature shows them, mingling them, not confounding them."

These fine phrases, however new, being looked upon by many as anything but true, to give them emphasis, he published his "Shakespearian" tragedy of *Cromwell*, a tragedy, however, "Shakespearian" in nothing but some glaring defects and crudities which the great English poet could have hardly



avoided in his time, and which he would in all probability be the last to defend. Instead of the sturdy life, the profound philosophy, the deep truth, and the enlivening variety of the Bard of Avon, we have in *Cromwell* a chronicle in rhyming dialogue, unrelieved by cunning art, poetic truth, or even the slightest historic veracity. Hugo's acknowledged failure, indeed, in this his first attempt at dramatic composition, obliged him often afterwards to modify his extreme ideas a good deal, though it must be confessed that in two respects he has always shown himself as unchangeable as fate: he always keeps his sublime beside his grotesque, and to his historical personages he gives the slightest possible reality. For such a profound lover of *truth*, he shows an exceedingly great ignorance of history.

*Cromwell*, however, in one sense could not be exactly counted a failure; being a dramatic poem, rather than a play, its merits could not be tested in the theatre. Accordingly, while one party received it with shouts of derision, another welcomed it with enthusiasm as the harbinger of the new era. Hugo's friends, Sainte-Beuve, the two Deschamps, Boulanger the painter, Alfred de Musset, Nodier, etc., forming a club called the *Cénacle*, unanimously elected him president, and started, as an organ of their own, a paper, called the *Muse Française*, to advocate the new doctrine, and mercilessly belabor all opponents. "The strongest article of *Cénacle* creed," as a wit of the day said, "is the total denial of any claim to our respect possessed by any one over eighteen years of age."

The youthful band, however, possessed genius enough not only to save it from death by ridicule, but even to ensure it for a while an undoubted triumph. Not to speak of the others, Hugo's new poem, *The Orientals*, published in 1829, if weak in thought was perfect in versification, and extremely rich in gorgeous coloring; and his next novel, *The Last Days of a Condemned Man*, if repulsive in the whole groundwork, and false in its observations, to this day excites our admiration as a psychological study of astonishing vigor. No one, in fact, could deny that the leader of the Romanticists was a poet by organi-

zation and temperament, but that he could reflect calmly, observe truly, judge accurately, or write with a fine discrimination, was denied then as vehemently as it is denied to-day.

"Give them a real play, President," said the *Cénacle*, "so that they can see what the new school can do in the theatre." *Marion Delorme* was the reply to this demand, but the Censors considered it decidedly too gross for representation. *Hernani* was then announced, but, though the same objection could not be made to this play, it was so violently opposed that even the French Academy went to the King and conjured him, in the name of taste and good sense, to forbid this new profanity of the daring innovator. The reply of Charles X. is well known: "In theatre matters I have a right to nothing except my own seat in my own box!" February 26, 1830, is a memorable day in the annals of the French stage. *Hernani*, a five act drama in verse, written in opposition to every rule then known and till then religiously cherished and observed, was acted in the *Théâtre-Français*. The house was packed, but not with critics or dispassionate judges; every spectator was an uncompromising partisan. Very little of the play could be properly heard. Shouts, hisses, cat-calls, applause, yellings, uproar, tumult, incessant during the evening, finally culminated in violent recriminations and personal encounters. The students, artists, journalists, and other devotees of romanticism, proving themselves possessed of better lungs, or of more vigorous muscle, remained masters of the field, and, having driven their opponents out of the theatre, assembled in the foyer to celebrate their victory by dancing, singing, and shouting, "*Vivent les Romantiques! Racine's smashed!*" From that night it must certainly be acknowledged that drama has conquered tragedy.

Before the enthusiasm excited by *Hernani* had time to cool, Hugo's new work, *Notre Dame de Paris* (the Hunchback of Notre Dame), took Europe by surprise, and extorted from his fiercest adversaries the acknowledgment of incontestable genius. It is certainly a masterpiece, one of the most remarkable books of the nineteenth century. *Quasimodo* may be a monstrous chimera, *Claude* a melodramatic sensualist, *Gringoire* a Vol

tairian 300 years ahead of time; in fact, most of the other characters — always excepting *Esmeralda*, a really charming creation — may be nobodies. Still, there is no resisting the enchanting spell it throws over us by its wondrous pictures of the romantic past, as seen by the eyes of Victor Hugo. As if by the wave of a magic wand, it transports us into the centre of his Paris of the Middle Ages, with its gloomy streets, its roistering students, its quaint but poetic life, its reckless and excitable population, its grotesque houses, its picturesque towers, its frowning palaces, and above all its grand and glorious old Cathedral! Not even Sir Walter Scott ever gave us a work of such amplitude, movement, and epic power. The bird's-eye view of Paris alone, whether strictly correct or not, most probably not, shows vast and enthusiastic research.

A volume of his poems, too, published this year (1831), *Autumn Leaves*, though confused in ideas, and diffuse in style, and already showing a tendency to introduce the poet's personality too often to the reader's notice, is probably his best poetic work, the thoughts, fresh, vigorous and lofty, being expressed with great sweetness and harmony. As to his plays, the Romanticists do not seem to have improved him much by "smashing Racine." Even the government of July, that had been weak enough to wink at *Marion Delorme*, plucked up courage enough to forbid the hideous *Le Roi s'amuse*, somewhat known to English play-goers as the *Fool's Revenge*. His succeeding plays, *Lucrecia Borgia*, *Mary Tudor*, and *Angelo*, are noisy melodramas, full of poniards, poison bowls, trap-doors, and back-staircases. By degrees it seems at last to have dawned on Hugo's own mind that the ability to write very fine lyrical passages is only a slender qualification towards making a successful dramatic author. Or perhaps it was Lamartine's laurels that would not allow him to sleep. Anyway, it is certain that, finding *Ruy Blas* (1838) and the *Burgraves* (1843) very unceremoniously handled by the critics, the disgusted poet renounced dramatic composition for ever, and turned his attention to politics.

In 1841 he was forced on the French Academy, the majority

being by no means his admirers, but in his reception address he astonished everybody by saying very little on literature, but a great deal on the art of ruling the country. *The Rhine*, published next year, betrayed the same dream of triumphs in the tribune, the same aspiration after ministerial honors, the romantic river proving anything but a fertile subject for poetry, enthusiasm, picturesque description, or glowing historical association. In 1845, when called to the Chamber of Peers with the title of Count, he did not hesitate to hail Louis Philippe as "the most eminent of European kings, the crowned Sage who scattered from the summit of his throne the words of universal peace." In 1847, however, he sails on quite another tack, for we find him threateningly advising the government "to occupy itself with the masses where there is so much courage, so much intelligence, so much patriotism, so much utility, but at the same time so much inflammability that at any moment we may expect a deadly explosion."

The explosion coming in 1848, and Hugo quickly giving his adhesion to what he called "that majestic social form, the republic, which our fathers have seen grand and terrible in the past, and which we wish to see grand and beneficent in the future," he was elected to the Constituent Assembly by sixty thousand votes. Here, though generally voting with the conservative party, he soon began to be suspected of socialistic views, and in a paper of his own, called the *Evènement*, he showed himself extremely bitter towards General Cavaignac, at that time the head of the executive authority. He stoutly advocated, however, the establishment of two Chambers instead of one, and refused to cast his vote for a Constitution containing such a germ of calamity. He received the election of Louis Napoleon to the presidency with the most marked favor, and in 1849 was elected to the Legislative Assembly, tenth on the list of the twenty-eight Deputies of Paris. In all probability he was at this time expecting some ministerial position, which, however, the Louis Napoleon Cabinet did not offer him. In vain did his paper endeavor to explode "the vulgar and absurd prejudice that a poet must be feeble and incompetent in the practical



affairs of life." In vain did he parade his sparkling definition of the poet statesman, combining at once "hand and head, heart and thought, sword and lamp, who is both gentle and strong, gentle because he is strong, strong because he is gentle, conqueror and legislator, king and prophet, lyre and sword, apostle and messiah."

No portfolio making its appearance, M. Victor Hugo began to see some logic in Emile de Girardin's extreme views, and in fact was soon drifting towards the most advanced democracy. Pretending to believe it to be in the power of the government to destroy indigence, he asked the Assembly to pass laws for the suppression of misery. He warmly joined Ledru Rollin in his attacks on the Roman Expedition, but he prudently took no part in the insurrection which drove that demagogue to England. He spoke so disrespectfully of the Pope that he drew on himself a severe rebuke from Montalembert. His eloquence at last made him the recognized organ of the Mountain. In fact, the extremely violent and imprudent measures that he advocated in the Assembly so alarmed the country as to render a Dictator necessary, and a *Coup d'état* possible. In his famous speech opposing a revision of the Constitution, a measure of such extreme need and importance that 80 out of the 86 departments of France expressly demanded it, he uttered the well-known words: "What! because after a thousand years a man came and picked up the sword and the sceptre of Charlemagne — Because this man, whose name is synonymous with Rivoli, with Jena, with Friedland, dropped in his turn this sword and this sceptre, must *you* pick them up? Pick them up, as *he* picked them up after Charlemagne? Pick them up with your puny hands? What! after Augustus, Augustulus? What! Because we have had a Napoleon the Great, must we have a Napoleon the Little!"

Rhetoric of this kind not preventing the *Coup d'état*, Victor Hugo's name was on the first list of those banished from France as enemies of the new government. Furious at such treatment, he took refuge in the island of Jersey, where, safe under the protection of England, he devoted the early years of his exile



to firing broadsides of hot shot at the enemy, of which *Napoleon the Little* in prose and *Castigations* in poetry are the best known. *Contemplations* (1856), written in a calmer mood, have all the defects of his earlier poetry, chaotic thoughts and redundant style, with but little compensating improvement. In 1859 he published his *Legend of the Ages*, a vast collection of poems, announced, however, as only a fragment of a work still vaster, a *Trilogy*, of which the other two parts were to be *Satan's End*, and *God*. In this year he haughtily refused to accept the amnesty offered to all political exiles in consequence of the French successes in the Italian war. In 1869 he refused with still greater pride the second amnesty, alleging as a reason the "barrier of honor" that his own line had placed in his way:

"If there remains but one, that one shall be I."

His real reason, however, does not seem to be anything else but ruffled pride which never forgives, and a wish to remain in safe quarters whence he might fling whatever missiles he pleased without the least danger of being called to an account.

In 1862 appeared *Les Misérables*, published simultaneously in six different languages, and so well known that nothing more need be said of it here than that its profits must have been enormous. His *Songs of the Streets and Woods* (1865) were treated very severely by the critics as a vast agglomeration where trifles, thoughts, truths, grotesque fancies, flung together at random, seem no more entitled to be called poetry than the incoherent rhapsodies of a pianist trying his instrument are to be called music. *The Toilers of the Sea* (1866) did not give much pleasure, and the *Laughing Man* (1869), in spite of book-selling dodges, is said to have ruined the publisher, the author seeming to possess all Voltaire's shrewdness in making bargains.

*Sedan* brought him back to Paris, where he immediately presented the citizens with two cannons named *Victor Hugo* and *Castigation*, and wrote an address to the Germans, calling on them to start a republic at once and help their French brethren. In 1871 he came out second in the list of the 43 Deputies of the

*Seine*, but, finding his speech against the treaty listened to very impatiently at Bordeaux, he resigned in disgust and retired to Brussels. Here, however, offering an asylum to some fugitive Communists, his house was mobbed in spite of the police, and himself obliged to quit Belgium. In 1872 he published the *Année Terrible*, his impressions of the Prussian War. His powerful *Ninety-three*, published five years ago, and appearing simultaneously in ten languages, is still fresh in the minds of most of our readers. Elected to the Senate in 1876, for six years, he took his place at the extreme Left, and his first proposition was complete amnesty for the Commune. In 1877 he published the *Art of being a Grandfather*, and the *History of a Crime*; his last work (1878) is a rhapsodical poem entitled *The Pope*. An excellent designer, he has furnished many illustrations, among others, for the new and splendid editions of *Ninety-three*, and *Notre Dame of Paris*.

As a genius gifted with marvellous imagination and extraordinary power of glowing expression, Victor Hugo is possibly one of the greatest men the fertile soil of France has ever produced. Still, we can pronounce him to be little better than a failure. With all his splendid creative power he has left us nothing really great or good, nothing to elevate our thoughts or soothe our hearts. He seems to be deficient in the stamina necessary for a great character. Beginning life as a Royalist and Classicist, a little of the world's incense soon turns him Romanticist and Democrat; on through the diapason he passes, July Monarchist, Napoleonist, Republican, Socialist, and, at present, he has but to blame himself if the world thinks him a Communist. All through, however, he remains the same proud, conceited, self-absorbed Victor Hugo. When that great man is aggrieved, take care! He scolds like a beldame, and is as implacable in his sulk as an over-petted school-boy. His political pamphlets are sorry reading, his genius seeming to evaporate in his anger. *The History of a Crime* is no pamphlet, but a highly elaborated romance. Even his sympathy for the poor and suffering has not the true ring—as we can easily judge for ourselves. Instead of loving his poor and desiring to relieve

them, we feel ourselves too often hating somebody or something, probably the author himself and his antithesis. It is perhaps to this mania for antithesis that much of his faults are to be attributed. Though he hates and denounces regularity, antithesis makes him as regular as the puffs of a high-pressure engine. To borrow his style: one-half of his sentences is always enough to read; contradict it and you have the other. His influence on literature has been profound and lasting, but hardly for its advantage. His disciples, however far beneath him in the wonderful originality and vast sweep of his fancy, find it an easy matter to follow him in his habitual disregard of the beautiful, his general negation of the grand, and in his morbid passion for delineating the cruel, the repulsive, the monstrous and the terrible.

Note 64 — REGNARD — page 109.

JEAN FRANÇAIS REGNARD (1655-1709), comic dramatist of the first rank, Molière alone being his superior, son of a wealthy Parisian merchant, was a great traveller in his youth, and encountered many strange adventures. Captured by pirates and sold in Constantinople as a slave, he so gained on the good graces of his master that he was set free for a comparatively light ransom. Starting off again, this time in a different direction, he visited Denmark, Russia, Sweden and even Lapland, reaching the Arctic Ocean, on a mountain in sight of which he engraved the famous Latin lines:

*Gallia nos genuit; vidit nos Africa; Gangem  
Hæmus; Europamque oculis lustravimus omnem;  
Casibus et variis acti terraque marique,  
Hic tandem stetimus nobis ubi defuit orbis.*

(France gave us birth; Africa caught sight of us; of the Ganges have we drunk; all Europe have our eyes surveyed; many vicissitudes have we experienced by land and sea; here, where the earth itself fails us, have we at last come to a halt.)

In 1683 he settled at Paris; possessing an ample fortune, he led a life of pleasure, one of his chief amusements being literary composition, for which his joyous nature, experience in life, and a very ready pen eminently fitted him. His plays,

written in verse, were acted at the *Théâtre-Français* with remarkable success, their principal characteristics being great liveliness, naturalness, farcical incident, rather than profound portraiture of character. His *Le Joueur* (the Gambler) is still one of the masterpieces of the *Français*. After an epicurean life of 54 he died suddenly, some say by his own hand in a fit of spleen, but most probably of an indigestion brought on by an excess at the table. Like Molière, Regnard was never admitted into the French Academy, but the members of that body, by way of reparation, offered, in 1857, a prize for the best eulogy on his memory.

Note 65 — RUBENS — page 109.

PETER PAUL RUBENS (1577-1640), the most celebrated artist of the Flemish school, and one of the few painters that can be truly called great, was born on Saints Peter and Paul's day, in Siegen, Westphalia, where his father, an Antwerp magistrate, had sought shelter with his family during the religious and political troubles occasioned by the rising of William of Orange against the Spanish domination. These troubles of his infancy, however, seem to be the only troubles this most favored of mortals ever experienced during his life, and even these were considerably diminished by a childhood passed in Cologne, of which city he always cherished an affectionate recollection. At the period of his father's death in 1587, Spanish authority being reëstablished at Antwerp, his mother returned to her native city. In this famous school of religious and classic learning the boy, resuming his education, prosecuted his studies with such success that at the age of sixteen he could speak and write Latin with almost as much facility as his native language. Life opened pleasantly before the brilliant youth; but the post of page, procured for him by his mother's influence in one of the noblest households of Flanders, proving distasteful to him from its monotony, he obtained with some difficulty her permission to devote himself to painting. His first instructor, Van Ort, a great colorist, proving otherwise objectionable, he left him for Van Veen, the court painter at Brussels, the "Flemish Raphael."



an excellent artist, and the real master of such a distinguished pupil. His progress in four years was so remarkable as to attract the attention of the Viceroy of the Low Countries, Albert of Austria, and his wife Isabella, daughter of the King of Spain, who strongly recommended him to visit Italy, and supplied him with suitable letters of introduction. He was now twenty-three, and his progress, until his return eight years afterwards, was nothing but a series of brilliant successes.

At Venice, to which city of Titian, Tintoretto and Paul Veronese, his innate love of color first irresistibly attracted him, he distinguished himself so much by the excellence of his work that Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua, not only gave him plenty of orders, but even put him at the head of a commission employed to convey to the King of Spain some magnificent Neapolitan horses, and other costly presents. On his return he went to Rome, where he soon made himself known and appreciated; at Florence, he received a highly honorable reception from the Grand Duke, Ferdinand dei Medici; a desire to see the works of the Caracci brought him to Bologna, but he soon hurried back to Venice to complete his studies of the great colorists. These finished, he returned to Rome, the great school for *Form*, and *grandeur of Design*, where he remained several years, studying as carefully as the numerous orders received from Pope, cardinals, princes, abbots, and churches would permit him; at Milan he executed a drawing by which Lionardo da Vinci's *Last Supper* has been best known as an engraving. At Genoa he painted two pictures, still to be seen in the Cathedral, and of which the Genoese are so proud that they consider them to be his masterpieces.

At the news of his mother's serious illness, he hastily started for Antwerp, but, hearing of her death before his arrival, he retired to St. Michael's abbey, near Brussels, where he endeavored to solace his grief by designing her tomb. His flattering reception at Brussels, especially at the Viceregal Court, induced him to abandon his notion of returning to Italy, but, with his noble patrons' permission, Antwerp became his favorite residence. Here he built a stately house in the Italian style, carefully pre-



served to this day, married very happily, and the Viceroy did him the honor of holding his first-born over the baptismal font. Antwerp soon began to reap the fruits of his genius, most of the churches, convents, monasteries, abbeys, etc., demanding altar-pieces, many of which are still carefully preserved in that old Catholic city. To this period of his life belong his great masterpieces, the *Descent from the Cross*, the *Elevation on the Cross*, and the *Assumption of the Blessed Virgin*. The first is said to have had its origin somewhat curiously.

When his house was nearly completed, it was found that through some mistake a good deal of it had been built upon a lot belonging to a guild of the city, called the Confraternity of Gunsmiths. Unwilling to give up their rights, but loath to quarrel with the great artist, the Confraternity consented to waive their claim in case he painted for their chapel in the Cathedral a picture in honor of Saint Christopher, their patron. The word *Christopher* meaning a *Christ-bearer*, the idea pleased the painter, but he determined to improve on it. The *Descent from the Cross*, that masterpiece of painting, was the result. It is covered by shutters which, when opened, also bear pictures. The shutter to the right represents the *Blessed Virgin*, the first Christ-bearer; the shutter on the left represents *St. Simeon* in the temple holding the Blessed Infant in his arms, the second Christ-bearer; the picture itself in the centre, represents the *Cross*, *St. John*, the *Maries*, and *Joseph of Arimathea*, all equally Christ-bearers. Critics are never tired of praising this wonderful picture. One says: its unity is perfect, everything conspiring to draw the eye to the central figure, the body of Our Lord,—a wonderful body, adorable, heavy, flaccid, dead, but still perfectly preserving the dignity of divine majesty. Sir Joshua Reynolds says: “the Christ is the finest figure ever created; it is most correctly drawn, though in an attitude of the utmost difficulty to execute. The hanging of the head on the shoulder and the falling of the body all on one side give such an appearance of the heaviness of death that nothing can exceed it. The light irradiating the whole picture depends altogether on the daring venture of *white upon white*, and on the

contrast presented between the dazzling shroud and the ivory pallor of the divine body, which still stands out in astonishing relief from a ground of almost exactly the same color." Strange to say, at first the Gunsmiths did not see much merit in these pictures, and looked in vain for their patron; but the good-natured artist removed every objection by painting on the outside of the great shutters a colossal *St. Christopher carrying the Divine Infant*.

His fame by this time had become so great that he was invited, in 1620, to Paris by the Queen Dowager, Marie de Medicis, to adorn her palace of the Luxembourg, and was received with the greatest honor. He sketched the outlines, and made the measurements in Paris, but took them for execution to Antwerp, where, of course, with the assistance of his numerous pupils, in twenty months, he painted the famous twenty-four pictures representing the life of Marie de Medicis that are found now in the Louvre. But painting was not to be the only way by which this great man distinguished himself. At Paris he met the Duke of Buckingham, who, well aware of his influence with his patron, the Archduchess Isabella, thought proper to acquaint Rubens with the strong desire of his master, Charles I., to see the two countries, England and Spain, come to a good understanding. Conversing on this subject with the princess on his return to Brussels, Rubens so impressed Isabella with his great tact and good sense that she sent him to Madrid, a kind of unofficial ambassador, to lay the matter before her nephew, Philip IV., King of Spain. Here he painted several very fine pictures, still to be seen in the *Museo*, and soon became a great favorite, for, though the Spaniards did not like his stout, brawny, Flemish, and often ungraceful forms, they pardoned much to such rich harmonious color that shone like a light from within; in fact they could hardly help being pleased with the bold, joyous, animal nature of his pictures, the riotous impulses, and the energetic action of his exuberant flesh and blood. After a sojourn of 18 months in Madrid, he received private orders from Philip IV. to proceed to London, where, while still acting as artist, and in that capacity painting the ceiling at Whitehall,

and *War and Peace* at present in the National Gallery, he actually succeeded in concluding a mutually beneficial treaty between Spain and England. Charles I. testified his extreme satisfaction by conferring on Rubens the order of knighthood, and loading him with magnificent presents.

As may be imagined, his fame as a diplomatist redoubled his orders, which could not now be executed without the aid of his numerous pupils, many of whom, in particular Van Dyke, Jordaens, and Teniers, afterwards rose to great distinction. In 1631, five years after the death of his first wife, he married again, this time a young lady only seventeen, whose face is so well known wherever his later pictures are to be found. In 1633 his old friend and patroness, the Archduchess Isabella, died, and Philip IV. sent his only brother, Don Ferdinand, to govern the Low Countries. Victorious over his enemies, the Swedes, at Nordlingen, the young prince entered the Low Countries in triumph, and the citizens of Antwerp, inviting him to visit their city, commissioned Rubens to make all the necessary preparations to ensure him a joyous and magnificent reception. Never was artist more happy, more industrious, or more successful. The splendor of the preparations exceeded all description, but unfortunately Rubens himself, the soul of the entertainments, was not able to be present himself, a kind of gout having attacked him in the hands, from which he occasionally suffered exceedingly great pain. But Ferdinand, during his stay at Antwerp, did not forget to call frequently on the illustrious artist and enjoy several hours of his pleasant conversation.

He was now 58 years of age, and in the full enjoyment of all his intellectual faculties, but from this time until the day of his death, five years later, he could paint but little, his fingers being unable to hold the brush. He was buried in his own Chapel in the Church of Saint James, where this mausoleum, erected by his widow, is still to be seen, besides the *Holy Family*, a famous picture painted fifteen years before his death, into which the artist has introduced himself, his parents, his wives, his children, and friends, including the celebrated *Lady in the Straw Hat*,

another copy of which, the only one in the world, is to be seen in the National Gallery, London.

Magnificent, generous, benevolent, incapable of envy, Rubens was a great favorite in every country, and with all ranks, "a frank, honest, and bountiful man." "The best workman with his tools that ever exercised a pencil," his consummate excellence lay in the brilliancy of his coloring, and the rapidity of his execution. Restless in his activity, he could not bear to lose a moment, and when not painting he was reading Latin, French, Italian, or English. Even when hard at work, he generally had somebody to read aloud for him passages from Homer, or Plutarch, or Livy, or Virgil, having some connection with the subject in hand. Simple and temperate in his habits, he rose early, and went every morning to church to hear mass. In the afternoon his usual distraction was to take a dash out into the country on one of his magnificent horses, of which animals, as well as of dogs, he was always passionately fond.

His facility was prodigious, remarkable pictures bearing his name, and acknowledged to be his, amounting to upwards of 1500. History was perhaps his predilection, but he was at home in everything — portraiture, landscape, fruits, flowers, and animals, all springing up with equal readiness under his versatile pencil. He had not the enchanting grace that we find everywhere characterizing the works of Raphael, but he possessed, in a supreme degree, the fire that manifests itself by astonishing us and moving us. He preferred splendor to beauty, often sacrificed correctness of drawing to the magic of color, and seldom rose to the ideal; but his merit is incontestable in grandiose effects, in enthusiastic activity, astounding energy, and the endless variety of his composition. In a word, his merits immeasurably surpass his defects, and, if Raphael and Michael Angelo are to be placed in the first rank of painters, Rubens comes nearest to them in the second.

Note 66 — **FLORIAN** — page 109.

J. P. CLARIS DE FLORIAN (1755-1794), poet, dramatist, and fabulist, spent his early years at his grandfather's residence, the



Château de Florian, Languedoc, in the loveliest regions of southern France. While yet quite young he was often taken to visit his grand-uncle, Voltaire, at Ferney, who liked the child's lively rattle, and nicknamed him *Floriannet*. His paternal estates being nearly all squandered through extravagance, at 15 he entered the household of the Duke de Penthièvre as page, and by his sprightliness, sensibility and good nature secured the lifelong friendship of his illustrious patron. At first adopting his father's profession, that of arms, young Florian passed some time at a military school, and commanded a company in the Penthièvre dragoons, but, soon discovering the inconveniences of a military life for which he had no particular capacity, he resigned his commission and gratefully accepted the appointment of gentleman in ordinary to the Duke. This post he retained as long as he lived, his principal duty being to distribute the generous alms of his charitable patron, either in Paris or at his country-houses at Anet or Sceaux. This congenial life allowed him plenty of time to devote to literature, a strong propensity to which he had acquired from his mother, a lady of Castilian lineage and well versed in Spanish prose and poetry.

His first publications, however, showed little more than delicacy of taste and fineness of touch. But his *Galatée* (1783), though mostly imitated from Cervantes, excited attention by its lively coloring, and the graceful songs by which it was interspersed. *Estella* (1788), another pastoral, altogether his own, though purer, fresher, and more elegant, was less successful; it was considered deficient in vigor; as a wit of the time said: the sheep, shepherds, and shepherdesses were all charming, *but nothing could compensate for the absence of the wolf*. His first prose work, *Numa Pompilius*, though still a great favorite, is little more than an imitation of Fénélon's immortal *Telemachus*, *Numa* being the composition of an elegant young gentleman of the frivolous eighteenth century, and *Telemachus* reading like the translation of an Athenian of the days of Pericles. Of his numerous *Tales* and *Stories* also, it must be sufficient to say that, though we occasionally meet lines witty, forcible, and even elegant, Florian's muse is more remarkable



for easy graceful movement than for vigorous or prolonged flight. Still his *Comedies* (1779-1782), by their sensibility and naturalness, obtained a great success at the *Théâtre Italien*, *The Two Notes*, in particular, being still often played on the French stage. Crowned twice by the French Academy, he was admitted a member of that body in 1788.

In 1791 his *Gonsalvo of Cordova*, another prose poem, appeared, preceded by a *Notice of the Moors in Spain*, so remarkably well done that many have considered Florian capable of becoming quite a distinguished historian. His *Fables*, however, written to amuse the habitual melancholy of his patron, are by far the best of his works, and are still quite popular. They are written with much ease, tact, naturalness, and finish; and so far, they have secured Florian the second place in a style of literature of which La Fontaine easily holds the first.

So far everything had gone well with our author. He had been gradually growing in general estimation, his pen had enabled him to pay off much of the debt encumbering his estate, his patron had been the kindest of men; when suddenly the crash of the Revolution burst over his devoted head. It murdered the Princess de Lamballe, his patron's daughter-in-law; it cut short the old Duke's days; it flung the poet as a nobleman into prison, from which he emerged but to die from combined horror, grief and bad treatment, a few days after the death of Robespierre had put an end to the reign of terror.

*William Tell*, written in prison, and *Don Quixote*, a free translation from Cervantes, were not published till long after his death. The *Blind Man and the Paralytic*, alluded to in the text, is the name of one of the best known of his *Fables*, inculcating the moral that we should assist each other. His works have been translated into several languages, and he is still quite popular in France from the smoothness of his style and its gentle, pleasing sensibility.

Note 67 — ARIOSTO — page 110.

LODOVICO ARIOSTO (1474-1533), surnamed the *Divine*, author of *Orlando Furioso*, and one of the great Italian poets,

passed his infancy and the greater part of his life in Ferrara, the capital of the duchy of that name, and at the time one of the most flourishing and polished towns of Europe. The citizens still point out the house of his ancestors, and show us the very apartment where the young poet, with his brothers and sisters, played *Pyramus and Thisbé*, a tragedy composed in his tenth year. They also show the house, built by himself, to which he removed after his father's death; over the doorway the following inscription is still visible :

*Parva, sed apta mihi, sed nulli obnoxia, sed non  
Sordida, parva meo sed tamen aere domus.*

(This house is small, but it suits my circumstances; it is in nobody's way, it is not mean, and it has been acquired by my own money.)

When asked by a friend how he, who had created so many splendid palaces in his poems, could bear to build such an humble structure, he replied: "*Amico mio, porvi parole e porvi pietre era ben altro* (my friend, word-building and stone-building are two very different things)." Obeying the orders of his father, a trusted soldier high in favor with the Duke, he prosecuted the law for five years, "five years lost," he says himself, but finally he gave it up for the more congenial pursuit of literature. His principal master was Gregory of Spoleto, under whom he acquired a good knowledge of Latin, but, his teacher being carried off to France to superintend the instruction of a young Italian prince detained there as a hostage, Ariosto never learned Greek. At his father's death he found himself involved in difficulties, from which he was never able to extricate himself wholly as long as he lived. As the eldest of the children, he felt himself obliged to support his mother, five sisters, and five brothers, one of them a cripple, an obligation keeping him so closely occupied as often to make his very life a burden.

His principal employment at this time was that of chief secretary to Cardinal Hippolito d'Este, Duke Alfonso's brother, who, though no great lover of poetry, had a great admiration for his literary talents. Ariosto must have had a busy time of it. Alfonso, Lucretia Borgia's husband and an ally of the French

against the national party headed by the Pope, was almost continually at war. Of these troubles Ariosto had his share. Sometimes we find him sent to Rome and elsewhere on important embassies; sometimes we find him risking his life in terrible battles; most of the time he is kept closely at work by the Cardinal at his clerical duties; and he is never free from the irksomeness of supporting the family, educating and establishing his brothers, and getting his sisters respectably married. Yet in the midst of all these distracting occupations he found time to commence and complete his great poem. His friend Bembo, at this time a learned layman and afterwards a famous Cardinal, hearing of his project, advised him to write his poem in Latin verse: "No," said he, "I would rather be first among the Tuscan poets than second among the Latin." He was not deficient in self-confidence. "Instead of an epic," said he to one of his friends, "I shall write a romantic poem, but one of such grandeur, both in subject and style, that no poet will ever hope to surpass me, or even to equal me, in a poem of the same kind."

The result of this determination, *Orlando Furioso* (Roland the Furious), though a continuation of *Orlando Inamorato* (Roland in Love), written a few years before by Boiardo, another Ferrara poet, and greatly admired at the time, is entirely original, occupying its author at least eleven years in its composition. It is a splendid tale of chivalry told in poetry, recounting the marvellous exploits of the knights-errant, particularly of *Roland*, Charlemagne's nephew, who goes mad when he hears that his loved *Angelica* is married to another, and of *Astolpho*, who rides to paradise on the *Hippogriff*, and finds there *Roland's* senses, narrating the loves of *Rogero* and *Bradamante*, mingling with great art the gay and the grave, the charming and the terrible, and introducing many lively tales to vary the heavier parts of the poem. Its versification is rich, harmonious, easy, free, and still so highly finished that his countrymen have called him the *Divine Lodovico*. Nevertheless, like much English poetry of the same and even of a later period, it mingles the sacred and the profane in such an indiscriminate jumble, and often shows such little respect for even ordinary decency that

Cardinal Hippolito, his patron, to whom it was dedicated, far from feeling proud of the compliment, or thanking the poet for the distinction, saluted him with the often quoted words: *Dove diavolo, Messer Lodovico, avete pigliato tante coglionerie?* (Where the Fiend, Master Louis, did you manage to pick up such a heap of nastiness?)

The poet's feeble health not allowing him to accompany the Cardinal to Hungary in 1518, Ariosto entered the service of Duke Alfonso, who, however, was at this time so much harassed by frequent wars that he was not always able to pay his employés their regular salary. Perhaps it was some necessity of this kind that compelled him to send Ariosto as governor to a wild province among the Apennines, Garafagna, on the marches of Lucca, infested with bandits and other rebellious spirits produced by the disordered state of the country. The poet, however, is said to have discharged his difficult task with such prudence and determination, that by the end of three years he had reduced these ferocious characters to submission to the Duke's authority, and restored the country to complete peace and order. Speaking of this period in his life, an Italian biographer relates that one day, when passing through a mountain defile, the governor, accompanied by only a few servants, suddenly found himself in the presence of an armed band of robbers, so well prepared, and so numerous as to put all idea of resistance out of the question. What is, however, the poet's surprise when, instead of being attacked, he sees himself respectfully approached, cap in hand, by the bandit captain, Pacchione, who has just learned his name from a servant. In most courtly language the robber chief expresses his delight at having met the immortal author of *Orlando Furioso*, and asks as a great favor to be informed how he can be most serviceable to such an illustrious gentleman. Whether true or not, this story is characteristic, and would make a fine subject for a painter able to do it justice.

After his return to Ferrara, the rest of his life was passed in discharging his ordinary duties, in retouching his Poem with much care and attention, in writing plays, and superintending

their performance in the beautiful theatre constructed after his own designs. His health was never good, and he died at the comparatively early age of 59.

In addition to a fine person and noble presence, Ariosto possessed an engaging address, polished manners, and a most amiable disposition. He was passionately fond of independence, as can easily be seen by his poetry. Encumbered with the care of his father's numerous family, he never married until near the close of his life, and even then it was a secret marriage, probably because he was in the enjoyment of some small ecclesiastical benefice. Titian painted his portrait, and some say he was crowned as poet by the Emperor Charles V.

Of his *Orlando Furioso* (Rose's translation is the best) it may be said that whilst its extraordinary merits have consigned to eternal oblivion the countless romances of the preceding centuries, its own glory was soon eclipsed by that of Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*, a poem of the same style, but far superior in grandeur of conception, development of character, splendor of ideas, a fine sense of moral beauty, and more enthralling human interest.

Note 68 — **COUSIN** — page 110.

VICTOR COUSIN (1792-1867), Member of the French Academy, Peer of France, Educationist, and founder of *Eclectic Philosophy*, son of a goldsmith and violent revolutionist, was born in Paris the very year the first Republic was proclaimed, and received his education in the *Lycée Charlemagne*. In his eighteenth year he entered the famous Normal School, heading the list of the first 37 successful applicants that were admitted into that newly organized establishment. Though interested in rhetoric and music, he was powerfully attracted by his teacher Laromiguière's exposition of philosophy. "The first day I heard him," he says, "decided my life. He taught Locke's and Condillac's philosophy, happily modified on some points, with a clearness and grace that appeared to remove every difficulty, and with a charming spiritual *bonhomie* that penetrated and subdued." His next teachers were Royer-Collard, pro



fessor of philosophy at the Sorbonne, and Maine de Biran, one of the most profound metaphysicians of his time. His talents soon obtained for him the appointment of teacher in the Normal School, and from 1815 he lectured on philosophy in the Sorbonne, supplementing Royer-Collard, who had been raised to a civil office at the Restoration.

In 1822 France was in a very disturbed state. The feud between the Reactionaries and the Liberals had come to a crisis. For some time it was doubtful which should give way. But the rapid spread of the secret societies, the assassination of the Duke of Berry, murdered expressly to put an end to the Bourbons, the riotous insubordination of the students at most of the government schools, and other alarming symptoms of an impending revolution at last frightened the country to such a degree that the Reactionaries or Conservatives were for a while allowed to do as they pleased, and the Liberals had to succumb. Among other measures dictated by terror or prudence, Guizot was removed from the chair of history in the Sorbonne, the Sorbonne itself, the law, military, and medical schools were temporarily suspended, and the Normal School was closed indefinitely. Cousin's lectures on free-will being considered to have a political intent, his course had been already suspended in 1821.

Having already visited Germany during his vacations, and made acquaintance with some of its leading philosophers, Cousin, taking advantage of his leisure, and having charge of the education of a son of Marshal Lannes, visited that country again, but in 1824 he was thrown into prison at Berlin, and detained there six months, either being suspected of *carbonarism*, or having rendered himself obnoxious to the police by offensive expressions incautiously uttered.

This double "martyrdom" in the cause of liberty, and the interest excited by his *Philosophical Fragments* (1826-28) rendered him so popular that the resumption of his lectures at the Sorbonne, which the Reactionists were now powerless to prevent, kindled a tremendous enthusiasm among the students. All Paris, in fact, came to hear and applaud the famous professor, whose reappointment was hailed as a great triumph for

constitutional ideas. But, independent of all this, he was well worth hearing, and as an orator enjoyed the highest reputation. He was exceedingly eloquent, but even in his warmest flights he never forgot himself. If any one could teach the Parisians philosophy, Cousin was the man. The simplest could understand him, the highest could relish him. The students, accustomed to the dry, crabbed phraseology of the other professors, adored the lecturer who made philosophy almost as interesting as a novel. Grand and comprehensive in outline, he excited the reason; by a clear, methodical and picturesque treatment of detail, he captured the attention. "Popular as Abelard," as was said at the time, "he was as impressive and majestic as Bossuet." His influence was immense in reviving a taste for ideal philosophy in France, which had been almost completely destroyed by the sensationalism of the eighteenth century.

The Revolution of 1830, interrupting his lectures, turned his attention to politics, but principally to education. In 1831 he became a member of the Board of Public Instruction; in 1832 he was made director of the Normal School; in 1833 his report on the system of public instruction in Prussia became the basis of the common school system of France. Indeed, until the overthrow of the July dynasty in 1848, Cousin might be considered the main director of the philosophical and even literary studies of young France, the grand corner-stone of what was often called in derision "State Philosophy." And, though he was bitterly attacked, both by theologians and socialists, it cannot be denied that he has done more than any other man of the century for establishing and improving primary education throughout France. In 1840 he became Minister of Public Instruction during Thiers' short administration, and in 1844 made his famous speech, before the Chamber of Peers, in defence of the *University* and *Philosophy*. In 1848 he aided the Revolution by a series of Tracts, in the most popular of which, entitled *Justice and Charity*, he combated the doctrines of socialism.

During the last eighteen years of his life he seems to have taken little interest in politics, education, or even philosophy. Placed on the retired list of honorary professors, he passed

the greater part of that time economically but pleasantly in a suite of rooms in the Sorbonne, studying the manners and customs of his favorite seventeenth century, and writing *con amore* most charming biographies of the famous women that illustrated that interesting period of French history. His magnificent library of 14,000 volumes he bequeathed to the Sorbonne, where a monument has been erected to his memory.

Few philosophers have attracted the attention of their contemporaries more powerfully than Cousin, yet, though an enthusiast on the subject, and a voluminous writer, he cannot be said to have originated any distinct system of philosophy. He simply published system after system, elucidating them, popularizing them, presenting their distinctive features with all the charms of a captivating style, and then endeavored to deduce a philosophy of his own, by picking out all the good points, and rigidly rejecting all the rest. A man of little originality, but of profound learning, and strongly infused with good common sense, he reminds us of Cicero who readily believed and supported every doctrine that strongly appealed to his moral, religious and eminently practical instincts. But as this is what most of us do in our own small way, *Eclecticism*, in the Cousin sense of the term, has now almost ceased to designate any particular school of philosophy.

We conclude with a short extract from Cousin's writings, giving us in a few words the substance of his system, and a specimen of his style.

All the elements of human reason are reducible to two : the *Relative* or real, and the *Absolute* or ideal.—To this same law of the Relative and the Absolute the science of the True, the Good, and the Beautiful is also subject.—Nor can the science of the philosophy of history escape it. The great facts of history being the decrees of a providential government, and God animating nature and humanity, nature and humanity must have their necessity, and the judgments of history must be the judgments of God himself. History being thus the judgment of God rendered visible, everything finds its place in history, everything is good. Even war has its advantages, and victory is necessary, useful, and just ; the conqueror is always right, and the people get only what they deserve. Generally everything is just in this world, and happiness and misery are about as evenly divided as they should be. Hence comes historic optimism, the highest idea to which philosophy has yet risen. The history of philosophy, which is the absolute and adequate exposition of the nature

of thought by thought itself, and of which the history of civilization is only the pedestal, undergoes the same ternary law as philosophy itself; therefore, *sensationalism* and *idealism* having inspired it by turns, it is now the turn of *eclecticism* to take its share of the task; for eclecticism is now the only philosophy possible in the nineteenth century, the only standpoint from which the history of philosophy can be written.

Note 69 — LONGUEVILLE — page III.

ANNE GENEVIÈVE DE BOURBON-CONDÉ (1619-1679), sister of the great Condé, and celebrated all over Europe for her wit, grace, and beauty, had been so carefully educated by her pious mother that she at first thought very seriously of retiring to a convent; but, being induced by some friends to visit a court ball one evening, she was so dazzled by the sensation created by her beauty that she suddenly renounced the notion, and soon became the gayest of the gay. Married at 23 to the Duke de Longueville, a man double her age, she led a wild life for several years, and, when that curious civil war, called the *Fronde*, broke out against Cardinal Mazarin, first minister of France during the minority of Louis XIV., Madame de Longueville, naturally fond of excitement and delighting in intrigue, threw herself headlong into the rebellion, becoming at once its heart and soul. When the troubles were all over at last, Madame was still in the splendor of her beauty, but all at once, when on a visit to a convent, she felt herself seized with sentiments of repentance, sincere enough to last the rest of her life. Here are her own words: "One day, while listening to a sister reading some pious book, I suddenly felt as if a curtain had been torn away from before my eyes; *truth* stood revealed in all its charms; *faith*, which I had believed to be dead and buried long ago under my passions, showed itself still alive; I felt myself to be like a person who, after a long dream in which he has fancied himself to be great, happy, honored, suddenly awakes to find himself loaded with chains, covered with wounds, exhausted with pain, and shut up in a loathsome dungeon." From that moment she quitted at once and for ever intrigues of every description, and, though still surrounded by the seductions of the world, she led a strictly religious life, doing every-



thing in her power, by alms and otherwise, to repair the ravages of which she never ceased to blame herself as the cause by her conduct in instigating the civil war. The death of her son, the young Count de Saint Paul, killed while gallantly charging at the passage of the Rhine (1672), gave her a violent shock. In one of Madame de Sévigné's letters we find a touching description of the manner in which the unhappy mother received the terrible tidings. She immediately entered the Convent of Port Royal, which she seldom quitted, except to visit occasionally the Carmelite Sisters in Paris, in the midst of whom she calmly expired in the sixtieth year of her age. Cousin has published two interesting volumes on the life and times of this famous princess.

Note 70 — BAUCHER — page 113.

FRANÇOIS BAUCHER (1805-1873), riding-master, circus-master, inventor of a "New Method" of horsemanship, is well known in this country by his famous work published in Philadelphia in 1852, and still highly esteemed by trainers generally. By a systematic series of gymnastic exercises of the animal's muscles, especially those of the neck and jaw, his method claims to be able to reduce the horse to the rider's complete subjection, and its results are not exaggerated by Legouvé; but the French government, after repeated trials, seems to have considered it too refined for general adoption in the cavalry service.

Note 71 — JANIN — page 126.

JULES GABRIEL JANIN (1804-1874), the famous dramatic critic, for nearly forty years the brilliant, gossiping, piquant, airy, dashing and graceful *feuilletoniste* of the *Journal des Débats*, Member of the French Academy (1870), founder of the *Revue de Paris*, and the *Journal des Enfants*, began his literary career as a violent opposer of the government, continuing his attacks even after the Revolution of July. In 1836, however, he managed to obtain the good graces of Louis Philippe, and became chief editor of the dramatic department of the *Débats*, where he continued making and unmaking reputations at will until his death in 1874. His other works in the shape of romances of all kinds,



travels, pictorial histories, essays, prefaces, translations, almanacs, album, keepsake and magazine articles, miscellanies, etc., are actually without number. The best is a so-called *History of Dramatic Literature* (1858, 6 vols.), a careful selection from his most careful *feuilleton* articles. He dubbed himself the *Prince of Criticism*, and few ever dared to dispute the title. At the close of our sketch of Rachel (page 179), the reader may find a favorable instance of Janin's peculiar style.

Note 72 — MERLE — page 126.

JEAN T. MERLE (1785–1852), a journalist and dramatic author of distinction, Director of the Porte St. Martin theatre in 1822, tried, but without success, to introduce some English novelties on the French stage. In 1830 he accompanied the French army to Algeria as historiographer of the expedition. His critical and historical works are very numerous, most of them appearing in the newspapers and magazines. His plays, generally produced with some *collaborateur*, amount to at least 120, and some have been highly successful. The most remarkable are: *Le ci-devant Jeune Homme*, *Le Savetier et le Financier*, *Le Bourguemestre de Saardam*, and the farce of *Jocrisse*.

Note 73 — ROLLE — page 126.

JACQUES HIPPOLYTE ROLLE (1804 —), distinguished journalist, born in Dijon, completed his education in Paris, where he also studied law, but, preferring literature, he wrote in the *Figaro*, took an active part in the struggles of the press in 1830, attached himself to the *National*, afterwards to the *Constitutionnel*, principally as dramatic critic, his articles being always distinguished for severe taste, keen satire, and an elegant style. In 1849 he was decorated with the Legion of Honor, and during the Empire received the position of Director of the City of Paris Library.

Note 74 — GUIZOT — page 129.

FRANÇOIS P. G. GUIZOT (1787–1874), professor, historian, *Doctrinaire*, statesman, born at Nîmes in southern France, at

the age of seven lost his father who, though a Protestant and therefore friendly to the Revolution in some of its aspects, could not help exclaiming against its crimes and excesses, and of course perished on the scaffold. Taken to Geneva by his mother, young Guizot studied with great distinction in that metropolis of Calvinism, and in 1805 accompanied the Swiss Minister Stapfer to Paris as tutor to his children. During the Empire he took no part in politics, contenting himself with studying German philosophy, classical literature, and the history of England, for which country he always professed a great admiration. Towards 1812 he had acquired such distinction by his articles in the *Publiciste*, and by several successful volumes, particularly a *Dictionary of French Synonyms*, and an annotated edition of *Gibbon's Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire*, that his friends succeeded in obtaining for him the appointment of professor of Modern History in the Sorbonne.

With the Restoration, Guizot's political history commenced, and for thirty years his history was pretty much the history of France. His part at first was somewhat peculiar, and certainly the first half of his public career was by far the more glorious. The two great parties dividing the country at that time were: the *Royalists*, flushed with their victory, and determined to do everything for the defence of the throne; and the *Liberals*, conscious of their defeat, but not ashamed of it, and willing to accept its consequences, provided the *Chart*, guaranteeing constitutional liberty, a king with responsible ministers, and two representative Chambers, was faithfully carried out. But in the excited state of men's minds, moderation on either side was extremely difficult, the extremists, as usual, making it almost impossible. Besides these two great parties, another, proclaiming a strong attachment alike to the Bourbons and the Chart, and undertaking to *royalize the nation and nationalize the royalists*, was known as the *Doctrinary* party, named so perhaps in derision, or perhaps because it plumed itself on a strict interpretation of the fundamental doctrinal points of a really representative government. In politics the *Doctrinaires* somewhat corresponded with the *Eclectics* in philosophy. The best repre-

sentative of this party among the Deputies was Royer-Collard among the Peers the Duke of Broglie, and in the press Guizot. When Decazes, a moderate royalist, and a favorite of Louis XVIII., was ordered to form a ministry in 1818, he appointed Guizot director-general of the Administration.

Under the guidance of such men, supported by the solid sense of the nation at large, France would have progressed rapidly on the road of order and prosperity, if she had not been continually interrupted by the ultra Royalists on the one side, and the ultra Liberals or Revolutionists, on the other. The assassination of the Duke of Berry, heir apparent, by a fanatical workman who wished to end the Bourbons, excited such a cry of horror and alarm throughout the country that the *Doctri naires* retired before the storm, Guizot sent in his resignation, and, his historical lectures being considered rather revolutionary, he was deprived of his chair, and the Sorbonne itself temporarily closed.

The silence of the professor allowing the writer more leisure, the next five or six years form the most laborious and most fertile era of his literary life. His works published at this time were mostly immense collections of *Memoirs*, translated sometimes, and always annotated by himself, relating to the early history of France, or to the history of the *English Revolution*, a subject for which he always showed an especial predilection. On the return of the moderates to office in 1828, Guizot was reinstated in the Sorbonne, where he delivered, with the most enthusiastic applause, his *Course of Modern History*, his *General History of European Civilization*, and his *History of Civilization in France*. This was the period of his greatest popularity. The citizens of Lisieux, in Normandy, elected him as their representative in the Chamber of Deputies.

The moderate Martignac cabinet not being supported by its party, the ultra-royalist, anti-revolutionary, no compromise, Polignac ministry easily came into power, and we all know that the final fall of the Bourbons was the result. Guizot was a busy man in those days. It was his hand that wrote the famous protest of July 27 against the *Ordonnances*, and it was his hand

that penned the proclamation of July 31, announcing the nomination of Louis Philippe, Duke of Orleans, to the Lieutenant-Generalship of the Kingdom. On August 11, Louis Philippe, King of the French, in his turn nominated Guizot minister of the interior.

The first care of the new ministry was to set the new government right in the eyes of Europe, no easy matter seeing that the Revolution, starting from but a small fraction of the country, had given an enormous impulse to the audacious aspirations of the extreme Republicans. These made no secret of exclaiming that the reconstruction of the throne was an infamous piece of deception, and their actions fully accorded with their words. The ministry was too much divided as to the proper mode of dealing with these difficulties, to remain long in office, but its successor, the Laffitte ministry, had even less success. Churches were demolished, the Archbishop's residence pillaged, his splendid library thrown into the Seine, the cross was insulted and the lilies of France openly torn down; a ministry capable of allowing the perpetration of such excesses retired before the storm of general indignation, and Casimir Perier was called on to form a cabinet.

This energetic minister soon restored order. As long as he held the helm of state, no mob dared to commit an outrage with impunity, no foreign government dared to treat France with disrespect. He suppressed the insurrection at Lyons, freed Belgium by driving the Hollanders out of Antwerp, and headed off Austria's interference in Italy by seizing Ancona. His bold and prudent measures were rapidly restoring order at home, and respect abroad when, unfortunately, this true patriot died suddenly of cholera, which he had caught by visiting an infected hospital. The death of this great minister was a severe blow to the friends of the government, but its enemies had at the same time received blows just as severe. The Legitimists were thrown into despair by the failure of the Duchess of Berry in La Vendée, the Republicans by a tremendous defeat in the streets of Paris, and the Napoleonists by the unexpected death of their chief hope, the Duke of Reichstadt. These coinci-



dences rendered the formation of a new ministry an easy task under Soult, in which Guizot received the portfolio of public instruction, and retained it for four years.

In this employment he was truly at home. As a great professor few surpassed him ; as a grand organizer of public education none equalled him ; his enlightened and successful efforts during the four years of his administration to establish primary schools throughout the length and breadth of France, and to ameliorate the condition of the teachers should entitle him to the eternal gratitude of his countrymen. " No consideration of sect or party should affect you," he wrote to the teachers ; " you should keep yourselves high above all the momentary issues that are continually distracting society. Faith in Providence, the sanctity of duty, submission to parents, respect for the law, honor for the prince, and a strict regard for the rights of another—these are the sentiments that you should continually inculcate." Far from confining himself to mere words, he watched strictly after the execution of the new law, and spared no pains to have its best features impartially carried out. If he had persevered in this career, and not devoted himself to politics, for which, in spite of his long continuance in office, he never showed any real aptitude, it is not too much to say that the French would have been as well educated long ago as the Germans are to-day. In his famous speech in support of this law, it is worthy of remark that Guizot, though an austere Protestant, took occasion to pay a high tribute to the self-sacrificing Brothers of the Christian Schools.

The attempt on Louis Philippe's life, in 1835, by Fieschi's *infernal machine*, killing 12 and wounding 28, raised such an outcry against the ministry as necessitated its retirement, and it would take us too long to detail Guizot's unwise proceedings to install himself once more in power. The famous *coalition*, the result of intrigues between himself and Thiers, a man of almost directly opposite views on everything, disgusted his old friends, and made the *Journal des Débats* exclaim : " Some day you may perhaps receive our support, but our esteem never ! "

During the Thiers administration, Guizot, sent to London as



ambassador, was treated with signal distinction on account of his religion, and the prominence he had given in his writings to English history and English literature. But his negotiations on the Eastern Question, at that time how to settle the war between Egypt and the Sultan, were a complete failure. Thiers was so chagrined, and France so indignant at being left out altogether in the Treaty of London (1840) that the *Marseillaise* was sung in Paris, a hundred million francs were voted for extraordinary expenses, laws were passed to fortify Paris, to increase the army, call home the fleet, and to start other warlike measures. But all these threats producing no effect on the other powers, Louis Philippe having no liking whatever for war, and the sober second thought of the country blaming the ministry altogether for having reduced France to such a false position, Thiers and his Cabinet could do no better than send in their resignation. It was instantly accepted by the king, who had no trouble in immediately forming a new ministry under Soult, with Guizot as Minister of Foreign Affairs. The insult, however, offered to France by this Treaty of London, whereby England, Russia, Austria, and Prussia, arranged the whole Eastern Question to their own satisfaction, and compelled France to play the part of a noisy blusterer, deeply wounded that country's self-love, and was one of the grievances for which she could never forgive Louis Philippe.

The new Cabinet, nominally under Soult, really under Guizot, was Louis Philippe's longest, but it was his last. Many consider it the meanest ministry that ever ruled France. "Peace at any price abroad," and "firm resistance to everything like reform at home," were its unchanging mottoes. The nation's indignation, shouted in thunder-tones, fell on unruffled ears. "Your insults cannot reach the level of my contempt," was the scornful reply of the stately minister. Neither he nor the king seemed to have caught the least glimpse of the storm that was so rapidly approaching. The howling people might make the welkin ring with cries for *reform*, electoral, parliamentary, and administrative; a skilful manipulation of the legal voters by the ministry ensured it a strong working majority of sleek, docile, and de-

voted office holders. The art of governing, intelligible to the meanest capacity, was discovered at last. England might grumble at the extension of French arms in the Society Islands and in Algeria; the reply was the marriage of the Queen of Spain's sister to Louis Philippe's son, giving rise to the very unpleasant prospect of a French prince occupying the Spanish throne. It was an additional grievance to England that Guizot had promised Lord Aberdeen that the nuptials should not take place until the Queen had given birth to a direct heir. Even France was rather irritated than flattered at the success of the negotiation; instead of considering it a triumph of French policy, the opposition decried it as the sordid success of a scheming father in securing his son a comfortable position in the world.

Notwithstanding all this, the ministry could always count on an imposing majority; its strength in fact was its ruin. Had the majority been slighter, ministers would have been more prudent. Now, no reform, nothing. Things went rapidly from bad to worse. The laboring classes, thrown out of work, became Socialists, or, not being allowed to vote, revolutionists. Two scandals in high places added to the general excitement, and aroused the country powerfully against the Aristocrats. Two ex-ministers were convicted of selling their official influence for money; and the Duke of Praslin poisoned himself in prison, to which he had been sent for murdering his wife under circumstances of peculiar horror.

The opposition, despairing of redress through parliament, had recourse to more dangerous means. Reform banquets were organized throughout the country. The result is well known. As already mentioned (page 291), the insurrection broke out on February 23, 1848. Guizot and his Cabinet resigned on the 24th. But it was too late. The destruction of an unpopular ministry involved the destruction of the monarchy itself, and the establishment of a Republic of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity.

Guizot fled to England, where he employed his leisure moments in demonstrating that no one understood better than himself the principles of safe and real reform. But not being

able to persuade his countrymen, on his return to France a few years later, to elect him to a seat in the Chamber of Deputies, he retired to his estate at Valricher, near Paris, and devoted the remainder of his days to literary pursuits. The most remarkable of his latter works are "*Memoirs of his own Times*," "*The Church and Christian Society*," a defence of the temporal power of the Papacy, and the "*History of France related to his Grandchildren*."

Though an unsuccessful and unpopular minister, Guizot — leaving aside some political manœuvres hard to reconcile with strict morality — was a highly honorable man. A ruler of France, for eight years, he left office as poor as he had entered it. An uncompromising Calvinist, he never showed any narrow Protestant bigotry. Quite the contrary; he often hurt the susceptibilities of his coreligionists by what they considered his intemperate zeal in behalf of Catholics: witness his warm and hearty welcome of the Jesuit Lacordaire to a seat in the French Academy; and again his famous discourse and pamphlet on the Pope's temporal power. "A deplorable disturbance," says he, speaking of Victor Emmanuel's machinations in Italy, "attacks and afflicts a considerable portion of the great Christian Church."

As an orator he was distinguished by elevated ideas, an authoritative tone, and firmness rather than sweetness of language. These qualities and defects are likewise found in his writings. A philosophic historian, he asserts rather than demonstrates. Caring little for detail, color, or dramatic effect, his philosophic eye often loves to discover broad relations in history invisible to the ordinary observer, and his philosophic pen often loves to trace those grand immutable "laws" that hang over nations like decrees of doom, predestinating a fate that it is both useless and foolish to attempt to resist.

Note 75 — MAILLART — page 130.

MAILLART (1812 —), actor, born in Metz, of parents who were provincial comedians, made his *début* when quite young. After trying printing for a while, he turned to the stage again,

and soon appeared at the *Gaité*, Paris. A *pensionnaire*, or salaried actor, in the *Théâtre-Français* for three years, he left it in 1841 for the *Variétés*; but entering the *Français* again in 1846, he was made *sociétaire*, or associate, the same year, and remained there till 1863, when he was put on the retired list. In spite of a pronunciation sometimes imperfect, of gestures rather negligent, of a voice too low, he has made his mark with the public, creating several original characters, particularly: *D'Aubigny* in *Mlle de Belle Isle*, *Rodolfo* in *Angelo*, *Flavigneu* in *The Ladies' Battle*, and the *Marquis* in *Mademoiselle de La Seiglière*, one of his greatest triumphs.

Note 76—SARDOU—page 131.

VICTORIEN SARDOU (1831 —), highly successful dramatic writer, was born at Paris, the son of Antoine Sardou, a school-master and educational writer of some distinction. He first studied medicine, but, either from necessity or not finding it congenial, he soon gave it up for literature, supporting himself as well as he could by giving lessons, and writing for the reviews, the dictionaries, or the inferior journals. In 1854 his first play, *The Student's Tavern*, failed miserably at the *Odéon*, but his marriage in 1858 with a Mademoiselle de Brécourt, introduced him to the famous Mademoiselle Déjazet, who, though in her sixty-second year, was at that time starting her little theatre on the Boulevard Du Temple. Here his name soon became well known, *Monsieur Garat*, and the *Prés St. Gervais*, in particular, proving quite decided successes.

Once sure of his public, Sardou's industry knew no bounds. It was no unusual occurrence for three of his plays to appear the same night in three different theatres. During the first twelve years of his career he wrote at least twenty-four successful plays; those best known in this country are *Pattes de Mouches* (A Scrap of Paper), *Nos Intimes*, *Famille Benoiton* (The Fast Family), *Nos Bons Villageois*, *Fernande*, *Rabagas*, *Oncle Sam*, *Dora* (Diplomacy), and *Le Bourgeois de Pont Arcy*, a highly successful drama in five acts, which appeared in 1878.

Such marvellous fecundity has laid Sardou open to the charge



of plagiarism, Edgar Poe, Barrière, De Bernard, Assolant, and many others being pointed out as the authors of the leading idea of his dramas, and often of much more. This he does not seem to deny, but nobody can contest his rapidity, his wit, his fun, his sprightliness, that never gives you time to reflect, and that always leaves the impression of having afforded you a hearty amusement. Another fault imputed to him by the critics is his readiness to sacrifice probability, consistency, delicacy, good taste, everything for one violent, sudden, stunning effect. The whole plot leads up to it, and it is sure to come, crushing the audience with a terrible blow, and extorting their admiration by petrifying them. There is no doubt, however, that while many of his plays have been written in too great a hurry, and while one of them, *Uncle Sam*, puzzles us by being the production of such a capable man, many others are very fine dramas, and the *Famille Benoiton* in particular is a very well written social comedy.

In 1877 Sardou was elected member of the French Academy in preference to Duke d'Audiffret Pasquier, President of the Senate, who at that particular period happened to be laboring under a cloud of political unpopularity.

Note 77 — PONSARD — page 134.

FRANÇOIS PONSARD (1814-1867), dramatic author and member of the French Academy, whilst receiving his early education at Vienne, on the Rhone, his native city, distinguished himself by his talents for versification; completing his classics at Lyons, he was sent to Paris to study law. Orderly, industrious, but not neglecting poetry, he accomplished his legal studies with great success, returned to Vienne to practise at the bar, translated into elegant French verse Byron's *Manfred*, and attended to the poetical department of a local review just established.

Rachel's astonishing success having revived a taste for classic studies throughout France, Ponsard, full of the inspiration, wrote the five-act tragedy of *Lucrèce* (Lucretia), and gave the manuscript to his friend Reynaud to be delivered to the great



tragic queen. But Mademoiselle did not deign even to open it. The reading committee of the *Odéon* refused it also, but Lireux, the Director, eagerly accepted it, and announced its early appearance in the *Odéon*, as a set-off to Victor Hugo's *Burgraves*, which had just failed signally in the *Théâtre-Français*. Victor Hugo, in fact, was just at this time under a very dark cloud. His marked attachment to the court had alienated his jealous friends, the Liberals; but, what was worse, the general public, disgusted with such hideous creations as *Lucrecia Borgia*, and *The Tower de Nesle*, had become heartily sick of all dramas of the Middle Ages. A strong party, therefore, hailed with pleasure the advent of a poet who could be opposed with some probability of success to the great autocrat of the romantic school. All Paris spoke of the new tragedy; and long before its representation all theatre-goers, the students particularly, were sharply divided into two great parties: the *Hugolaters* and the *Ponsardists*. *Lucrèce* was acted in April, 1843, with great success, and fully justified all the expectations formed of the author. The simple and familiar subject, the clear and vigorous tracing of character, the occasionally Corneillian ring of the versification, completely concealed the tinge of romanticism, and seemed to inaugurate a return to the great masters of the seventeenth century. It was crowned by the French Academy, and became one of Rachel's favorite plays in the stirring spring-time of 1848. But, in spite of its great success, towards which many causes not likely to occur again had powerfully contributed, *Lucrèce* was by no means a masterpiece of dramatic composition.

His next tragedy, in fact, *Agnes de Méranie*, a careful study of the Middle Ages which cost him three years' labor, did not come up to what was generally expected from the author of *Lucrèce*. It was really a better play, but there was no longer a Victor Hugo to conquer. And even in 1850, when Lamartine's *Girondins* had familiarized, if not popularized, revolutionary sentiments, Ponsard's *Charlotte Corday*, a five-act tragedy of romantic tendency, though full of noble ideas expressed in powerful and appropriate language, comparatively failed, prob-

ably for want of sufficient incident and interesting dramatic situations. As a wit of the time said: it was an Athenian patriot declaiming the history of the *Girondins*. *Horace and Lydia*, in one act, a sensuous trifle from the antique, played by Rachel, was pretty well received, but even Gounod's music did not save *Ulysses*, and *Homer*, though a good poem, hardly compares favorably with Chénier's lines on the same subject.

In 1852, after the *Coup d'état*, Ponsard's appointment as librarian to the Senate, excited such sharp comments from the *Siècle* that he not only resigned his position—but even fought a duel on the subject with Taxile Delord. He did better. He wrote a drama, his best, in five acts, *Honor and Money*, a fine satire on the pursuit of riches and office at the expense of honesty. Refused at the *Théâtre-Français* (1853), it achieved a most brilliant success at the *Odéon*. It opened the door of the French Academy to its author, and ten years afterwards was put on the repertory of the *Théâtre-Français* as one of its standard plays.

Of Ponsard's remaining plays, *La Bourse*, *Ce qui plaît aux Femmes*, and *Le Lion Amoureux*, it must be enough to say that the first did not reach the merit of *Honor and Money*, nor the third that of *Charlotte Corday*, and that the second was treated coldly by the public, and severely by the respectable portion of the press. As for the *Galiléo*, spoken of so fully by Legouv  , though a sketch rather than a finished work, it contains one passage, the famous description of the starry host, meritorious enough to insure its being henceforth included in every collection of the gems of French literature.

Never very strong, he died before he had completed his fifty-fourth year, and was buried at Vienne, where his fellow-citizens have erected a bronze statue to his memory in the chief square of the city.

Ponsard, sometimes called in derision the chief of the *common sense school*, was chief of no school at all, but a poet of some originality, conscientious, independent and industrious. A little more life and movement infused into his action, and a

little more firmness into his style, would have perhaps raised him to the first class of dramatic authors.

Note 77½ — **GALILEO** — page 134.

**GALILEO GALILEI** (1564–1642), best known by his Christian name, the founder of experimental philosophy, born in Pisa, of a noble but reduced Florentine family, showed from his earliest years a singular aptitude for mechanical inventions. His father, embarrassed with the care of a numerous family, gave him the best education he was able, and Galileo devoted himself so closely to the study of the great classical authors as to secure for his pen an elegance and clearness of style that afterwards made his writings models of excellence. Well acquainted with music too and drawing, he had moreover often, in his academic disputes, revealed an independent spirit unwilling to receive upon trust any explanation of physical facts that did not stand the crucial test of actual experiment. Thus mentally equipped, he was sent, in his eighteenth year, to Pisa by his father to study medicine.

Entering the Cathedral one morning, he remarked that the great bronze chandelier, suspended by a long chain from the ceiling, was swinging slowly backwards and forwards in very small arcs. At first he paid but little attention to the matter, but half an hour afterwards, noticing that the oscillation still continued, he began to observe it with some curiosity, testing its velocity by the beat of his own pulse. One fact soon struck his keen eye — each vibration, whether backwards or forwards, was performed in exactly the same space of time. Here was a discovery! With some slight power to overcome friction and the resistance of the air, would not such a swinging weight prove a perfect time-measurer? Tested and confirmed by numerous experiments, the idea never left his memory. He suggested it to physicians who wished to count the pulses of their patients, and fifty years later he employed it in constructing his astronomical clock. It is to Galileo, therefore, that we must award the honor of the first pendulum idea, though it must be acknowledged at the same time that it was not until fourteen years after

his death that its application was brought to absolute perfection by Huygens, the celebrated Dutch philosopher.

Though still studying medicine, his tastes decidedly disposed him to mathematics, and more particularly to experimental physics; he mastered Euclid, and, reading of Archimedes's famous plan for detecting the loss in weight of bodies immersed in water, he invented what is known as the *hydrostatic balance* to ascertain the specific gravity of substances in general. These successes, and others of the kind, together with his bold and original mode of discussing physical investigations, coming to the notice of the Grand Duke, Ferdinand Dei Medici, Galileo, in the twenty-fifth year of his age, received the appointment of professor of mathematics in the university of Pisa.

At this time, as for many a preceding century, the doctrines of Aristotle regarding the properties of matter prevailed all over Europe, though Lionardo Da Vinci, Nizzoli, and others had begun to shake their authority. One of these doctrines held that heavy bodies fall more rapidly than light bodies; that is, if a block of stone and a pebble were thrown off a high wall at the same moment, the block would be the first to reach the ground. Galileo denied this, asserting that all bodies, light or heavy, *fall to the earth with the same velocity in vacuo*, their actual difference in velocity being due altogether to the unequal resistance of the air. He proved the truth of his position by dropping unequal weights from the summit of the Leaning Tower, in the presence of immense crowds of spectators. This discovery of Galileo's is the germ of the theory of *universal gravitation* afterwards so fully developed by Sir Isaac Newton.

Receiving little more than a hundred crowns a year at Pisa, and being soon obliged by the death of his father to support the family, the young philosopher was very glad to hear of his being appointed by the Republic of Venice to the far more lucrative position of professor of mathematics at the university of Padua. Another reason too had made him desirous of leaving Tuscany. The Aristotelians—mostly churchmen, the laymen generally preferring arms to books—wedded to long established and plausible opinions, were rather puzzled than convinced by the

young professor's experiments, and readily referred their success to some unknown cause, which they could not at the moment explain. Galileo, indignant that they did not instantly embrace opinions as clear to himself as the sunlight, too often reproached their obstinacy with more zeal than prudence. Their replies, sometimes hasty, angry, illogical, like most replies of wounded pride, did not mend matters. But for their pride he took no consideration; he would make no allowance for a prejudice of the civilized world that had its root in a philosophy taught three hundred years before the Christian era. Here he was certainly unwise; it was this domineering pride of intellect, so jealous of homage, so impatient of contradiction, so unable to wait for the sure moment of its ultimate triumph, that afterwards led him into trouble and difficulties which a little prudence might have easily avoided. "Forgetting," as Sir David Brewster says, "that knowledge is progressive, and that the errors of one generation are replaced by the discoveries of the next, he did not anticipate that his own speculations might one day incur censure. Galileo, therefore, should have made allowance for the prejudices and ignorance of his opponents. Men are not necessarily obstinate because they cleave to deeply-rooted and venerable errors, nor are they absolutely dull when they are long in understanding and slow in embracing newly-discovered truths."

In Padua, where his reputation had preceded him, he was so well received (1593) that he spent eighteen years there, teaching with great success, writing for his pupils treatises on Dialling, Mechanics, Astronomy, and even Fortification, as was the custom with professors of Mathematics in those days. He invented an imperfect *thermometer* (the modern instrument, invented by Drebbel, a Holland philosopher, dates twenty years later), the *proportional compasses*, and considerably increased the power of magnets. In 1609 he made the astronomical discoveries that have rendered his name immortal. Hearing that a Holland optician had presented to Count Maurice of Nassau an instrument by which distant objects were seen with great distinctness, he set himself immediately to work, experimenting on



lenses of different refractive powers, until at last he discovered the *telescope*. His first instrument, which he presented to the Doge of Venice, magnified only four times, but the Doge was so proud of the gift that he appointed Galileo professor for life with a yearly salary of a thousand florins. His second instrument magnified eight times, but the third, constructed with great pains and skill, magnified thirty times. By means of this telescope, still preserved in Florence, mounted so that it could be directed towards the sky, Galileo was soon revelling in sights never before granted to human vision.

He saw the Moon bristling with lofty mountains, furrowed with tremendous chasms, and always presenting the same surface to the earth; he explained her *earthshine*, and noticed her *librations*, without being able to understand them. He saw Venus, crescent like the Moon, and presenting similar phases. He saw Jupiter's four satellites, noticed their occultations, and soon perceived their practical importance in determining longitudes at sea. He saw Saturn and his "handles," which it was reserved for Huygens to afterwards show to be rings. He resolved the *nebulæ* and the Milky Way into myriads of stars, and discovered the spots on the sun, though in this last discovery he is said to have been anticipated by the Jesuit Scheiner.

The announcement of all these astounding wonders in the numbers of a serial, written by himself, and called the *Nuncius Sidereus* (Starry Herald), produced, as may be well supposed, indescribable excitement in the learned world. Every sentiment was thoroughly aroused, from exuberant joy to scathing scorn, from the enthusiasm of faith to the ridicule of unbelief. Kepler says he was so confounded by the news of Jupiter's satellites that for some time he could neither speak nor listen.

In 1611 Galileo visited Rome where he was received with the greatest honor. Pope, Cardinals, Princes and Professors alike united in showing him their admiration, and received him "as if one of his own starry wonders had dropped from the sky." His best telescope, erected in the gardens of Cardinal Bandini, was the object of universal admiration. All Rome flocked to

gaze on the unspeakable prodigies never before revealed to mortal ken. Cardinal Bellarmine, Librarian of the Vatican, unwilling to trust his senses, wrote to the Astronomical Academy, directed by the Jesuits, to ascertain if the facts were as alleged. Father Clavius, so celebrated for his labors in the reformation of the Calendar, wrote in reply that the facts were unquestionable, adding "these things being so, astronomers must henceforth see that their constitution of the heavenly orbs can be reconciled with these phenomena." He was immediately made honorary member of the Lyncean Academy, founded in 1603 (60 years before either the French or British Academies of Science), by Prince Cesi, for the study particularly of the physical sciences. The name *Lyncean* (derived from *lynx*) alluded to the keenness of sight required for the proper study of nature.

In possession of reputation, wealth, high honors, and in the prime of life, the future days of Galileo now seemed destined to prove a continuation of his glorious career of startling, interesting and useful discovery. Nevertheless he soon found himself involved in trouble from which he did not entirely escape until the day of his death. For this we think himself was most to blame. He had no doubt many violent and unreasoning enemies, but his own pride was the greatest.

We have no notion of entering into the details of this quarrel; a general idea of its nature, sufficient for the ordinary reader, may be compressed into a few pages, though readily expandible into a volume.

In the beginning of the seventeenth century, the philosophy taught in the great European schools was mainly Greek, Aristotle's works, though not always implicitly followed, being the great groundwork of studies. The great authority on Astronomy was PTOLEMY, a learned philosopher, who had flourished in Alexandria in the second century. His book, called the *Almagest*, for 1400 years had been a kind of astronomical bible, and much of its information regarding the heavenly bodies was wonderfully accurate. Ptolemy had not been a great observer himself, but, by taking what he considered the best established notions of the previous astronomers and combining them to-

gether with great ingenuity, he had produced an astronomical system which accounted pretty well for the movements of the planets and the eclipses of the moon. Its chief feature was the motionlessness of the earth, around which all the planets revolved in epicycles, the sun itself not excepted.

The first serious blow struck at this system had been given by a Polish priest, named Copernicus (1473-1543), who, while studying at Rome in 1507, was astonished at the complications of the Ptolemaic system and the little symmetry or order it left in the world. Revolving its chief features over and over again in his mind, retaining what was incontestable and rigidly examining all the rest, he at last hit on the new system, called after himself the *Copernican*. Its grand principle is: the SUN is the centre about which the planets revolve in a spinning motion, the earth itself included. He passed more than thirty years of his life in collecting proofs to establish the probability if not the correctness of his theory, but the great work in which all these proofs were brought together and which he had dedicated to Pope Paul III., was not printed until 1543, a few days before his death. "From this time till 1616," says Drinkwater, "Copernicus's theory was left in the hands of the mathematicians and philosophers, who attacked it or defended it without receiving either support or molestation from ecclesiastical decrees." This shows that at the court of Rome it was regarded as a pure mathematical question with which the doctrines of the Church had nothing whatever to do. Copernicus's principal proof in support of his theory was its great simplicity, though, as he had enounced it, it was still exceedingly complicated. His idea that the planets revolved in circles rendered many astronomical phenomena almost impossible to be explained.

Tycho Brahe of Denmark (1546-1601), rejecting the Copernican system on these and other grounds, started what has been called the *Tychonic system*, making the *Earth* to be the centre around which the Sun, Mercury, and Venus moved, while the *Sun* itself was the centre of the revolutions of the other planets. Something was to be said even in favor of this system, for though Copernicus had been a very profound philosopher, Brahe had

been by far a more rigid and successful observer. But Kepler (1571-1630), a Wurtemberg mathematician who had assisted Brahe in his observations, and continued to work at them with incredible labor, by his famous *Laws*, completely destroyed the Tyconic system, and rendered the brilliant guess of Copernicus more plausible than ever. This plausibility had been converted into an almost irresistible probability by Galileo's recent telescopic discoveries, among others the phases of Venus and especially that of the miniature solar system, Jupiter with his Satellites. Strange to say, however, the strength of this last analogy was lost altogether on Galileo, whose principal argument for the spinning motion of the earth was founded on the flux and the reflux of the tides, phenomena with which it has not the slightest relation.

Regardless of its novelty and of its opposition to the testimony of our senses, the Copernican system, as understood by Galileo, was exceedingly difficult of rational demonstration, and naturally found general disfavor. Hume says, "Lord Bacon rejected it with positive disdain." Menzel says, "the Wurtemberg Calvinists persecuted Kepler so for this work that he was obliged to fly to Vienna, where the Jesuits, who knew how to value scientific knowledge, permitted him to remain notwithstanding his Lutheran principles." It is well known that Luther and Melancthon opposed Copernican ideas as being contrary to Scripture. The truth is that neither Galileo nor any one else was able at that day to give an incontrovertible reason to induce people to disbelieve their senses. Even to-day we have no direct proof of the earth's rotation, as anybody reading Chapter 6, Book 20 of *Arago's ASTRONOMY* can easily discover. Foucault's pendulum experiment and gyroscope experiment from which so much was expected for some time, have proved to be far from successful. And of the earth's revolution around the sun no positive proof could be given before Roemer had measured the velocity of light (1675), and Bradley (1727) had calculated the aberration of the celestial bodies. Our best argument to-day in favor of the Copernican theory is that, so far, it has shown itself readily reconcilable with every astronomical



phenomenon. But, as two centuries and a half ago most of these phenomena, eclipses, forward and retrograde movements of planets, etc., were pretty well explained by the Ptolemaic system, and as Newton's theory of universal gravitation was not heard of for half a century later, we need not be at all surprised that in those days many learned philosophers combated the Copernican theory altogether as an unfounded assumption, and that even its most enlightened admirers continued for a long time to regard it as a brilliant induction rather than a demonstrated truth.

And still less may we be surprised if preachers, full of intemperate zeal and by no means qualified by severe study for seeing the real difficulties of the question, thought proper to fling aspersions from the pulpit on the sacrilege of sending the world spinning in wide space around the sun. Among others, the Dominican friar Caccini made himself particularly remarkable in these attacks by his famous text: *Viri Galilaei, quid statis aspicientes in coelum?* (ye Galileans, why stand ye looking up to heaven?) But such exhibitions found no sympathy in Rome. Caccini was severely rebuked by his superior. Castelli, Galileo's pupil and friend, writing from Rome, says: "I have not spoken to any one who does not deem it a great impertinence in preachers to mount their pulpits to treat of such high professor-like matters before women and a congregation where there are so few to understand them." This same Castelli, when receiving instructions from the Provost in 1613 on his appointment to the mathematical chair in Pisa, was expressly allowed to teach the new opinion as *probable*, but not as the *declared* opinion of the school.

Galileo, however, would be satisfied by no such restriction. Considering the doctrine as already demonstrated, he wrote a letter to Christina, the Dowager Duchess of Tuscany, in which he undertook to prove theologically and by arguments drawn from the Fathers that the Holy Scriptures could be easily reconciled with the new doctrines. Here he made his first mistake. He should not, as his friend Cardinal Barberini, afterwards Pope Urban VIII., wrote to him, "have travelled out of the



limits of mathematics and physics, but should confine himself to such reasonings as Ptolemy and Copernicus had used, because, as to declaring the views of Scripture, theologians, authorized and approved, maintain that to be their own particular province." The Dominicans, getting hold of this letter, laid it before the Inquisition, but the case was soon dismissed, with the injunction that if Galileo pursued the course advised, namely, that of speaking as a mathematician, he would be put to no farther trouble. This very year, in fact, 1615, lectures were delivered in the Jesuit's College at Rome in support of the Copernican doctrine, and in the Pope's own university, the *Sapienza*, another Jesuit was delivering similar lectures. A contemporary writer says that Cardinal Bellarmine himself, the famous Jesuit, "never questioned the truth of Galileo's doctrine but only the prudence of his manner of propounding it." "Your affairs," writes another friendly Jesuit, "are now all settled; there will be no further difficulty about your writing on the Copernican system, as a mathematician and by way of hypothesis." This was the issue of his first trouble with the Inquisition.

But the great scientist was "too bad a theologian, and too good an astronomer" to allow the grand theory, to him as unquestionable as his own existence, to be thus quietly disposed of. Writing out another elaborate letter, he proceeded with it to Rome, of his own accord, "to learn," in his own words, "what he was to believe of the Copernican system." In spite, however, of the violent outcries of his enemies, he again experienced nothing from the Inquisition but liberality and kindness. Conscious that the question was an extremely difficult one, they had a strong repugnance to have it forced on them. "So far as I am concerned personally," Galileo writes to a friend, "I can return at any moment." But he did not return. "Do not raise the question," writes his friend the Bishop of Fermo, "lest by assuming the attitude of defence, where no attack is made, you may excite the suspicion of something wrong." This sensible advice he would not take. Determined to force a decision in accordance with his views, his advocate, Cardinal Orsini, seems to have pressed the matter just as unwisely and as un-

seasonably. The consequence is well known. Such persistence drove the angry Cardinals into an immediate condemnation of the system, not, however, as either true or untrue in itself, but as appearing for the present to be "contrary to the Sacred Scripture." That this meant, not "heretical" in the proper sense of the term, but "untenable as an absolute and unqualified truth," can easily be seen from Bellarmine's own words. "As soon," said the Cardinal, "as a demonstration shall be found to establish the earth's motion, it will be proper to interpret the Sacred Scriptures otherwise than they have been hitherto interpreted in those passages where mention is made of the stability of the earth and the movements of the heavens." In a letter to a friend on the following day, Galileo says: "The result, however, has not been favorable to my enemies, the doctrine of Copernicus not having been declared heretical, but contrary to Sacred Scripture."

For peace sake, therefore, to put a stop to loud outcries and in deference to honest but weak minds, the Inquisition thought proper to reduce the belligerent philosopher to silence. Not to absolute silence, however, but he was forbidden to put forward his doctrine as grounded on absolute and irrefragable truth. As Newcomb says in his late *Astronomy*, "the Inquisition prohibited the promulgation of the new doctrines as absolute truths, but were perfectly willing that they should be used as *hypotheses*, and rather encouraged men of science in the idea of investigating the interesting mathematical problems to which the explanation of the celestial motions by the Copernican system might give rise. The only restriction was that they must stop short of asserting or arguing the *hypotheses* to be a reality." In enjoining this restriction, they dispensed with every circumstance that might offend Galileo's pride. Bellarmine gave him a certificate assuring him that the Inquisition did not visit him with their displeasure but left him in the enjoyment of his opinions, only he must not propound them openly as undoubted truths. He was then admitted to a long and friendly interview with the Pope, and dismissed with every demonstration of favor and regard. Such was the result of the Inquisition's second inquir-

ing into Galileo's doctrine and conduct. It was brought on himself, altogether by his attempts, against the advice of his best friends, to have the Scripture explained in his own way.

During this very same year, 1616, the chair of astronomy in the Pope's own university of Bologna was offered to Kepler, the illustrious Lutheran astronomer, who by this time had acquired great renown, but who unfortunately always suffered from straitened circumstances. The apparent inconsistency of offering such an appointment to Kepler who had done more towards establishing the Copernican system than even Galileo himself, may be explained by the words of Fabbroni, the Tuscan ambassador at that time, in his letter to the Grand Duke. "Galileo," says he, "is heated in his opinions. — He is passionate in this affair — and will remain so, as he has hitherto done, bringing himself and every one else who will be fool enough to second his views or be persuaded by him, into danger. — He makes more account of his own opinion than of that of any of his friends. Cardinal del Monte, myself as far as lay in my power, and many Cardinals of the Inquisition have tried to persuade him to keep himself quiet and not to agitate this affair, but rather, if he has a mind to hold this opinion, to hold it in peace, and not to make such efforts to draw others over to his way of thinking."

Galileo, however, in spite of his indignation and love of argument, seems to have nominally observed his promise pretty well for fifteen or sixteen years. He returns to Florence where, as Mathematician Extraordinary to the Grand Duke, with a liberal salary and only nominal duties, he is treated with the highest consideration. Cardinal Barberini writes verses in his honor. Time advances. Many troubles distract the world. The Thirty Years' War breaks out in Germany and rages with great fury. Pope Paul V. dies and is succeeded by Gregory XV., the founder of the *Propaganda*. Gregory dies in his turn, and Barberini, Galileo's friend, is declared Pope, under the name of Urban VIII. Copernicanism is once more in the ascendant. Castelli, Galileo's pupil, is made the Pope's mathematician; Bérulle, an avowed Copernican, is raised to the dignity of Cardinal; Gali

Galileo himself, going to Rome to offer his congratulations, is received with the utmost cordiality and granted a life pension of 100 crowns, with one of 60 crowns for his son. The letter which he brings back from Urban to the Grand Duke concludes as follows: "We find in him not only literary distinction but the love of piety. And we further signify that every benefit which you will confer on him, imitating and even surpassing your father's liberality, will conduce to our gratification." In a conversation with Campanella the Pope uses these words: "It was never our intention to condemn the Copernican system, and, if it had depended upon us, the decree of 1616 would never have been made." In one sense the time seemed to have come at last for striking the grand blow; in another sense that time would have seemed further off than ever. A true son of the Church would hardly seek to embarrass her when Gustavus Adolphus was carrying everything before him in Germany; ordinary gratitude would have hesitated before heaping additional troubles and perplexities upon one's friend and benefactor. But "science" would not wait. The *Four Days' Dialogues*, a work at which Galileo had been carefully laboring for the last fifteen or sixteen years could be postponed no longer. The book did not pretend to be a learned treatise written exclusively for philosophers, but a series of conversations on astronomy, written in a popular but elegant and witty style, between a *Florentine*, a *Venetian*, and a stolid, stupid and rather ridiculous personage called *Simplicius*. The different systems are discussed, and all kinds of arguments, scriptural and otherwise, are brought forward to exalt the Copernican system and to crush the Ptolemaic. The *Florentine* and the *Venetian* are elegant gentlemen of the world, accomplished scholars, unprejudiced judges, perfect reasoners, able to set their own arguments in the strongest light, but always ready to do justice to an opponent's reasons, and ever open to conviction. *Simplicius*, on the contrary, is a bookish, conceited, old pedant, crammed with Aristotle, looking at everything through scholastic spectacles, unable to tell a good argument from a bad one, and losing his temper at every



little joke. The Copernicans, of course, obtain a glorious victory.

Let Sir David Brewster tell this part of the story :

But Galileo was bound to the Romish hierarchy by still stronger ties. His son and himself were pensioners of the Church, and, having accepted its alms, they owed it, at least, a decent and respectful allegiance. The pension thus given by Urban was not a remuneration which sovereigns sometimes award to the services of their subjects. Galileo was a foreigner at Rome. The sovereign of the papal state owed him no obligation; and hence we must regard the pension of Galileo as a donation from the Roman Pontiff to science itself, and as a declaration to the Christian world that Religion was not jealous of Philosophy, and that the Church of Rome was willing to respect and foster even the genius of its enemies.

Galileo viewed all these circumstances in a different light. He resolved to compose a work in which the Copernican system should be demonstrated; but he had not the courage to do it in a direct and open manner. He adopted the plan of discussing the subject in a dialogue between three speakers, in the hope of eluding by this artifice the censure of the Church. This work was completed in 1630, but, owing to some difficulties in obtaining license to print it, it was not published till 1632.

In obtaining this license Galileo exhibited considerable address, and his memory has not escaped the imputation of having acted unfairly, and of having involved his personal friends in the consequences of his imprudence.

The situation of Master of the Palace was, fortunately for Galileo's designs, filled by Niccolò Riccardi, a friend and pupil of his own. This officer was a sort of censor of new publications, and, when he was applied to on the subject of printing his work, Galileo soon found that attempts had been made to thwart his views. He instantly set off for Rome and had an interview with his friend, who was in every respect anxious to oblige him. Riccardi examined the manuscript, pointed out some incautious expressions which he considered it necessary to erase, and returned it with his written approbation, on the understanding that the alterations he suggested should be made. Dreading to remain in Rome during the unhealthy season which was fast approaching, Galileo returned to Florence, with the intention of completing the index and dedication, and of sending the manuscript to Rome, to be printed under the care of Prince Cesi (the founder of the Lyncean Society). The death of that distinguished individual, in August, 1630, frustrated Galileo's plan, and he applied for leave to have the book printed in Florence. Riccardi was at first desirous of examining the manuscript again; but, after inspecting only the beginning and the end of it, he gave Galileo leave to print it wherever he chose, provided it bore the license of the Inquisitor-General of Florence, and one or two other persons whom he named.—By the publication of such a work the dogmas of the Catholic faith had been brought into direct collision with the deductions of science. The leader of the philosophic band had broken the most solemn armistice with the Inquisition; he had renounced the ties of gratitude which bound him to the Pontiff; and Urban was thus compelled to intrench himself in a position to which he had been driven by his opponents.

Pope Urban VIII., attached though he had been to Galileo, never once hesitated respecting the line of conduct which he felt himself bound to pursue. His mind was



nevertheless agitated with conflicting sentiments. He entertained a sincere affection for science and literature, and yet he was placed in the position of their enemy. He had been the personal friend of Galileo, and yet his duty compelled him to become his accuser. Embarrassing as these feelings were, other considerations contributed to soothe him. He had in his capacity of Cardinal, opposed the first persecution of Galileo. He had, since his elevation to the Pontificate, traced an open path for the march of Galileo's discoveries; and he had finally endeavored to bind the recusant philosopher by the chains of kindness and gratitude. All these means, however, proved abortive, and he was now called upon to support the doctrine to which he had subscribed and administer the law of which he was the guardian.

So far Sir David Brewster.

The excitement in the world at large and the indignation at Rome in particular caused by the appearance of such a work may be easily surmised. His enemies were delighted. An immense number of inferior minds, the blind devotees of the Aristotelian style of teaching, many of them too in the ecclesiastical orders, had been long regarding the new discoveries with no favorable eye; they considered them extremely dangerous innovations, and were ready to go to any lengths to silence their authors or propagators. For these the hour of triumph had now come. The impious philosopher had dug a pit and flung himself into it "Not contented," they cried, "with attempting to undermine the Christian religion by means of his pretended discoveries and blasphemous arguments, he tries to render the Holy Father a laughing-stock in the eyes of the world by holding him up as that stupid old *Simplicius*!"

Urban, remembering he had been always Galileo's steady friend and supporter and well known to be a secret convert to the Copernican system, was amazed and irritated as well as grieved at the glaring unfairness of such an attack. The storm was too violent to be resisted. Galileo was hastily summoned to Rome to answer the Cardinals of the Inquisition why he had broken his promise of 1616. Why had he fraudulently obtained the approbation of the Master of the Palace? Why had he not informed him of the solemn injunction still in existence? He had himself, he was reminded, appealed to that tribunal of his own accord, he had forced its decision, and had solemnly pledged himself to abide by it. His word, therefore, so unequivocally given and so shamefully broken, they would never

trust again. The promise that had been asked of him only nominally, as from a man of honor, in 1616, he was now to swear with all solemnity to maintain. The doctrine, which he had been allowed to examine, support, and to demonstrate by scientific arguments, he was now condemned to solemnly abjure as "dangerous," and "heretical," not, of course, "heretical" in the proper and generally accepted sense of the term but in its legal and technical sense, which, as every lawyer who draws up a document well knows, is often very different from its ordinary and popular acceptance.

As to *heresy* in its real meaning, Cardinal Magalotti, a relation of Pope Urban's, writing to Galileo, says: "It is not in the power of the Inquisition, nor even of the Pope himself, to declare what is heretical or what is not. Nothing less than an Œcumenical Council can make any such declaration."

That this was Galileo's own view of the whole case is evident from the famous expression put into his mouth by history, and which he is likely enough to have uttered, rising from his knees, in a voice loud enough to be heard by the whole bench of Cardinals:

"E PUR SE MUOVE!"

(Singly my arguments may be weak, some of them unintelligible to the world at large, some of them "dangerous" however well-intentioned, many of them long before their time, and therefore useless. For the present then I readily abjure the doctrine of the earth's rotation, and for peace sake and fear of misconstruction give up teaching it. Still—my faith is unshaken. Still—I am as much convinced as ever. STILL IT MOVES!)

And that this was the understanding of the Pope himself, the Cardinals and of Rome at large is quite evident from their treatment of the "prisoner."

Ordered to appear at Rome, but to take his own time, he devoted twenty-five days to accomplish a journey of a hundred and fifty miles. He was entertained, until the trial came, at the delightful palace of the Tuscan Ambassador, Niccolini, "whose kindness," according to Galileo's own words, "can-

not be described." After a delay of two months, he was honorably lodged in the spacious apartments of the residence of the Fiscal of the Inquisition. "During the whole trial," says Sir David Brewster, "he was treated with the most marked indulgence; he stood before his judges with the recognized attributes of a sage; though an offender against the law of which they were the guardians, the highest respect was yielded to his genius and the kindest consideration to his infirmities." The penance inflicted on him, by way of punishment for his transgression, was an order to recite the seven penitential psalms of David once a week for three years!

For three days, counting from July 2, the day on which he received his sentence, he was nominally imprisoned in the Medici palace where, however, he was permitted to walk about in the beautiful gardens, to keep his servant, to see his friends, to receive all his letters, and to write whatever he pleased. The letters he wrote at this time, and still carefully preserved, set this fact beyond all doubt. Next day Niccolini told him that the Pope gave him permission to start for Sienna, where he had been invited by his friend, Archbishop Piccolomini, a contagious disease rendering an abode in Florence dangerous during the summer. On the tenth of July Niccolini announced his departure as follows: "Last Wednesday morning Signor Galileo started for Sienna in perfect health; from Viterbo he writes to tell me that in the cool part of the day he travelled four miles of the way on foot."

In Sienna he passed the summer and fall, devoting most of his time to a new work, *Dialogues on Local Motion*. In December he returned to his own home on the hill of Arcetri, overlooking Florence, where still stands the tower whence

the moon

Through optic glass the Tuscan artist viewed  
At evening, from the top of Fiesole,  
Or in Valdarno, to descry new lands,  
Rivers or mountains on her spotty globe.

Here he spent the remainder of his days, watching, working, writing, and it was here that he was visited by many distin-

guished strangers, among others by Gassendi, Deodati, and the English poet Milton on his tour through Italy, probably in 1638.

To the end of his life he never seems to have quite recovered the confidence of the Inquisition; in fact, he was to be free from disturbance only on the following conditions: 1. Not to give Academical lessons; 2. Not to hold assemblies; 3. Not to give large dinner parties; and 4. Not to make any public demonstration of irreverence. His chief companions were his two daughters, nuns of a neighboring convent, the premature loss of one of whom, however, he had soon occasion to deplore. His other frequent visitors were his favorite pupils Castelli, Torricelli, and Viviani, together with his near relatives the Buonamicis. For the last few years of his life also he had two young clerks sent from Rome to wait on him and to write for him, by Calasanzio, afterwards canonized, the famous founder of the *Pious Schools*. An incessant worker, the little rest he gave his eyes, especially in observing the moon and Jupiter's satellites, was followed by the usual consequence, weakness of vision, and finally a total loss of sight in the 74th year of his age. "The noblest eyes that Nature ever made are darkened," writes Castelli, announcing the sad event; "eyes so privileged, and gifted with such rare powers that they may be truly said to have seen more than the eyes of all that are gone and to have opened the eyes of all that are to come."

His loss he endured with the resignation of a Christian. "So it pleases God," he observed to a friend, "so it pleases me also." In spite, indeed, of this deprivation he does not appear to have spent the last four years of his life very unhappily. With the assistance of his clerks, he worked at his astronomical tables as hard as ever; he visited Florence occasionally; he was surrounded by devoted and loving friends; and he seldom hesitated publicly or privately to crack his jokes on the Ptolemaic system and all its abettors.

His numerous correspondence shows a strong disposition to grumble, but in a singular letter of his lately brought to light by Feuillet de Conches, the most successful autograph collector in

Europe, the following passage shows anything but a miserable state of mind or body : " *ILLUSTRE SIGNORE E PADRONE OSSERVISSIMO.* — The royal gift of 100 flasks two years ago and one of a small number two months ago, that of his eminence the Cardinal, that of their serene highnesses the Princes, those of his excellency the Duke of Guise, and my own two barrels of native wine, being all gone, I am compelled to have recourse to your courteous and truly imperial offer. You will, therefore, aiding yourself with the advice of the most refined tastes, obtain for me in all diligence and with all imaginable care, a provision of forty bottles or two cases of various liquors, the most exquisite that can be found. Spare no expense. With regard to other corporal pleasures I deny myself so much that I can easily afford to go to some expense in favor of Bacchus. You must not omit the wines of Scio, nor of Carini, nor the Greek wines, nor those of the country of my master, Archimedes of Syracuse, nor clarets, etc. On sending the cases, send the bill too ; I will pay it in full and at once."

At the ripe old age of seventy-eight, a slight attack of fever attended with palpitation of the heart, carried him off quietly in 1642, the year of Sir Isaac Newton's birth. Buried at first in the chapel of the Black Friars, his body was afterwards removed to the church of Santa Croce, where his monumental tomb, immediately opposite Michael Angelo's, is to-day one of the greatest attractions in that famous Pantheon of Florence.

Whatever obloquy was brought on Galileo's reputation by his own biting satire, by the ignorance of his enemies, and the undue severity of those who should have been somewhat more indulgent friends, was soon completely dispelled. Newton's theory of universal gravitation throwing such a flood of light on the Copernican system as to render it unassailable, Pope Benedict XIV. annulled the sentence condemning Galileo's famous work. His theory of the rotatory motion of the earth around its axis is a truth that to-day requires no demonstration ; as Father Secchi says, " it is a corollary of all astronomical science."

Galileo loved literature passionately, though his taste for poetry is questionable as he had all Ariosto by heart, much pre-



erring him to Tasso. He was of small stature but well built, of cheerful countenance but quick temper, disposed to find fault but ready to forgive, of genial habits, very fond of good cheer and of entertaining his friends at table ; he much preferred the country to the city, his chief amusement, when tired of his astronomy, being to cultivate his garden. For his own happiness he was too impatient of contradiction, too passionate, too headstrong, and too desirous of instantly grasping a glory that was really his own and which none could withhold from him. We can easily see that he had not a particle of the martyr in his composition. If his over-readiness to say cutting things brought him into trouble, he was just as ready to try to get out of it again by swallowing his words, with the whites of his eyes turned up, the corners of his mouth turned down, and his tongue stuck into the side of his cheek. Vanity, from the consciousness of a stupendous intellect, was perhaps the cause of it all. He need not have given himself so much trouble in forcing his truths on the world. Satisfied that he had sown the seeds of truth, he should have quietly given them the time to germinate. "For," as Sir David Brewster remarks, "if new and startling opinions are thrown in the face of the community, if they are uttered in triumph, or insult, in contempt of public opinion, or in derision of cherished errors, they lose the comeliness of truth in the rancor of their propagation ; and, like seeds scattered in a hurricane, they often only blind and irritate the husbandmen."

Translation of the inscriptions in Italian, Greek and Latin on Galileo's house at Arcetri, near Florence : "With God. In this modest house, O Traveller, Divine Galileo, the greatest contemplator of the heavens, the restorer, or rather the Father, of experimental philosophy, though troubled by the wicked arts of false philosophers, dwelled for eleven years, from Nov. 1, 1631 to Jan. 9, 1642. Here too he breathed his last sigh. Contemplate and venerate the sacred spirit and silent glory of a spot which, with the permission of Antonio Bonaiuti, lord of the manor, has been dedicated to eternity by Giovanni Baptista Clemente Nelli, Knight of the order of Saint Stephen, Senator and Florentine patrician."

His principal discoveries in physical science are: 1. The three laws of motion, and the law of falling bodies. 2. That a projectile describes a parabola. 3. That a pendulum swings regularly. 4. That air has weight. 5. The invention of the telescope. 6. The discovery of Jupiter's satellites, Venus's phases, spots on the sun, etc.

That he was ever subjected to the torture is an absurdity: 1. The dispassionate reader of his life can never see any reason for entertaining such a suspicion. 2. There is not the slightest shadow of any evidence on the subject. 3. Galileo was not made of the stuff that necessitated any such harshness; his facility to getting himself into trouble being almost surpassed by his readiness to abjure his way out of it.

Note 78 — **BEETHOVEN** — page 135.

LOUIS VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827), instrumental composer, probably the highest musical genius that has so far appeared on earth, the most ideal artist of the most ideal of arts, was born at Bonn, at that time in the electorate of Cologne, of Flemish descent, and inheriting from his father and grandfather, both singers, a strong predilection for music. Though manifesting much ability from his earliest years, he showed the greatest repugnance to regular systematic study, the whip, applied by the hands of a poverty-stricken, dissipated father, being often found necessary to make him take his lessons. It is an often told story that a spider used to drop regularly from the ceiling every day to listen to him while playing on the violin. One day, however, the mother, coming in suddenly, killed the insect before it could run up its thread again. The wilful boy, it is added, was so irritated at what he considered an act of wanton cruelty that in a fit of passion he broke his instrument to pieces, and no threats could induce him to take a lesson again for several days.

The child, however, was soon understood by Van Der Eden, the court organist, under whose care the young musician made rapid promise. He was fortunate too in having for a teacher Neefe, Van Der Eden's successor, who instead of confining

the boy, like his other pupils, to the usual highly important but rather uninteresting exercises, boldly plunged him at once into the middle of Bach's and Haendel's masterpieces. Neefe had made no blunder. At twelve Beethoven was perfect master of Bach's *Piano Instructor*, with all its exceedingly difficult figures and preludes. At thirteen he composed nine variations to a march, and three piano sonatas, published at Mannheim. At fifteen he was appointed assistant court organist, and in the roll of the Archbishop's musicians his name is still to be found with the remark: "Of good capacity, young, steady, of quiet behavior, and poor." He was now not only able to support himself but also to be of some assistance to his family by giving lessons, and seems to have attended conscientiously to his studies, devoting little time to original composition. At seventeen he was sent to Vienna to see Mozart, at that time the supreme monarch of the musical world, the Count of Waldstein furnishing the means and providing him with a proper letter of introduction. The great *maestro*, desirous to test the ability of a young musician who had already attracted some attention, gave him, by way of test, the development of a theme "bristling with difficulties." But the boy's astonishing art of improvisation was already so well developed that Mozart could not help exclaiming to the applauding company: "Keep your eyes on that young man: he will assuredly make his mark."

His mother's death recalled him to Bonn where he spent the next five years, his father's intemperate habits compelling him to support and educate his younger brothers. In 1792, the boys being able to do something for themselves, he was sent again to Vienna, this time by his patron, the Elector-Archbishop of Cologne, who allowed him a pension of 600 florins and besides introducing him to the best society, secured him the generous hospitality of Prince Lichnovski as an honored guest in his splendid palace. This was the happiest part of the great composer's life. He nominally studied under Haydn for a year or two but was always too fiery, impatient, and self-opinionated to profit much by that great master's lessons. His other teachers were Salieri for dramatic music, and the thorough scholar

Abrechtsberger, chapel master of Saint Stephen's, for counter-point.

His education being now completed and his powers thoroughly trained, his name soon becomes a well-known one in Vienna, where Mozart's cloak is said to have fallen on the shoulders of the young Rhenish musician. The very artists and amateurs that had interpreted the symphonies and quatuors of the great masters for Viennese society are now performing Beethoven's highly relished works with equal delight and equal success. In 1795 the young *maestro* visits Prague, Leipzig and Berlin, his extraordinary skill on the piano, but particularly his surprising improvisation, everywhere exciting the greatest enthusiasm. The *Musical Gazette* of Leipzig thus speaks of him in 1798: "Beethoven's style of play is exceedingly brilliant, though occasionally wanting in delicacy and clearness. But it is in following out the inspirations of his imagination that the young artist is particularly great. In this respect he is really extraordinary. Since Mozart's death, no talent has produced such effect as Beethoven's." His works, though not yet impressed with his profoundly original character, are luminous, intelligible, pathetic, and many of them reveal a peculiar sensibility not readily found afterwards. In 1800 he thus writes to a friend: "My compositions are very profitable; I may say I have more orders than I can fulfil. People no longer haggle with me; I set my price and I am readily paid." With 1800, what critics call his first manner comes to an end. His works, so far, reveal the influence of Mozart and Haydn, but are rapidly progressing towards original and independent power. Of these, extending to his 21st *opus*, the *Sonate Pathétique*, *Adelaida*, the *Septett*, and the *First Symphony* are the most celebrated.

With the nineteenth century his troubles begin. His generous patron, the Archbishop-Elector, dies; his beloved country, Rhenish Germany, is conquered and annexed to the French Republic; but, what is personally worst of all and, to a man in his position, peculiarly agonizing, a deafness, which, so far, has been only partial, gets worse and worse in spite of the efforts of the most celebrated aurists of Europe. Imagine what intense



distress such an affliction must prove to Beethoven, who felt his brain to be a restless sea of melody, ever vibrating with conceptions of enchanting brilliancy, ideas of the most elevated grandeur, and harmonies of unspeakable sublimity! Some say that the world has lost nothing through the unhappy artist's bitter deprivation. They say that it was this compulsory pouring forth of the lonely aspirations of a soul steeped in the gloomy grandeur of supernatural melody, like spirits mourning outside Paradise, that lifted his works to a pitch far transcending all previous effort, to the very highest regions, in short, of the loftiest ideal art.

However that may be, it is unquestionable that the infliction produced a most unhappy effect on the *maestro* himself, rendering him morose, suspicious and often so ill-tempered as to be almost unendurable. Of this no one was more conscious than himself, and his regret, expressed in a letter written on the subject to his brother, in 1802, is extremely touching. "O you men," he writes, "who believe me coarse, unfeeling, misanthropical, you act unjustly. From my childhood I felt a natural disposition to kindness, to benevolent actions. You don't know that for the last six years I have been in a miserable state of health, made worse, if possible, by ignorant doctors; and that, lured on from year to year by false hopes, I am now compelled to acknowledge that my cure, if even at all possible, must be long and painful. Born with a lively, ardent temperament, and strongly disposed to the enjoyments of society, I have been forced to bury myself in the solitude of a lonely life. Now and then I tried to forget my infirmity, but I was soon repelled by my difficulty in hearing, and could never bear to tell people to speak louder, to shout, that I was deaf! How could I bear to acknowledge the feebleness of a sense that should have been more exquisite with me than with others, and which I once indeed did possess to a degree of perfection seldom attained by men of my art. For me, henceforth, no recreation in society, no intimate conversation, no pleasant intercourse, no cordial outpouring of heart and soul. Living always alone, I must not approach society. I see before me the gloomy pangs of exile.



The moment I enter the world, a most painful sense of timidity oppresses me ; I fancy every one is remarking my condition."

To make matters worse, it would seem that a lady to whom he was most tenderly attached about this time, who had accepted his letters, and for whom he had composed his famous *Moonlight Sonata*, was cruelly deceiving him ; in fact, by marrying another, she left him so completely heart-broken that for some time his friends were apprehensive of his starving himself to death. He recovered, however, slowly after awhile, partly through a love for his art, partly through a notion, which he seems to have now entertained for the first time. It was to make some amends for the deficiency of his early education by studying antiquity and the ancient heroes, Brutus especially, thinking perhaps that Stoic philosophy would enable him to face the ordinary evils of life with indifference if not with patience. Long before the close of his life, however, he showed truer wisdom by addressing himself directly to the true Fountain of consolation for the weary and afflicted.

One of the grandest productions of his genius at this time, the *Heroic Symphony*, strange to say, had been at first intended for Napoleon Bonaparte, whom Beethoven, like many a young man of the period, had ardently admired as the leading spirit and representative of the "glorious" French Revolution. But the instant the news arrived in Vienna that the First Consul had been proclaimed Emperor of the French, Beethoven tore off the dedication, stamped on it, swore fiercely at the "tyrant," and had the piece performed under another name. This composition, however, the first in which he completely revealed himself in all his mysterious grandeur, his depth, his novelty, his far-reaching and almost unapproachable ideas, was in the beginning received with rather timid astonishment even by his greatest admirers, whilst it encountered the fiercest attacks from the uncompromising partisans of the old Viennese school.

His next great work, also, *Fidelio*, his well-known opera, produced in Vienna, in 1805, under the name of *Leonora*, had at first only a moderate success. This is not wonderful. To do full justice to such an opera, at least three requisites are indis-

pensable: first-class singers, a first-class orchestra, and an audience of first-class musicians. Under such circumstances alone can a work of such unapproachable skill, science, and genius be properly rendered. *Fidelio*, may never be "popular," but unquestionably it gains rather than loses by time, even in Paris where German music has usually such difficulty in making headway. The other great work of Beethoven's at this period, when music as an art seems to have reached its climax, is the symphony called the *Pastoral*. Without pretending to musical knowledge, the most of us know that a pastoral symphony in the old style usually undertook to describe, in musical ideas, a pleasant landscape, a murmuring brook, the singing birds, a village dance, a sudden thunder-storm, the dispersion of the dancers, and finally the thanksgiving prayer. These stereotype episodes Haydn repeats again and again, though always with a charming variety and a captivating interest. But how does Beethoven approach such a subject? His vast intellect cannot be circumscribed by any such narrow programme. Listening to his *Pastoral* we find nothing to remind us of the charms or terrors of mere rural life. Quite the contrary. We feel ourselves, at the outset, in the presence of a human soul, simple, honest, and in the calm enjoyment of a happy tranquillity. But we are soon made aware of the existence of an evil thought, lurking deep in a fold of the heart, buried away almost out of consciousness, but gradually making itself felt, like a worm hatched in a fruit. The evil thing gradually assumes proportions more and more formidable; it is soon fearfully disturbing the tranquillity of the alarmed conscience; finally it becomes a fierce, ungovernable, unsparing passion. The soul suffers, moans, writhes, bursts out into prayers, imprecations, cries of agony. But Virtue triumphs; Sin retires, his howlings weaker, fainter, more confused, are at last lost in the distance. The poor soul recovers its former tranquillity and, at the feet of Eternal Wisdom, pours itself forth in prayers of intense joy and gratitude. This is what Beethoven's *Pastoral* tells us, but we do not mean to gainsay the taste of those who find the imitation of cooing doves and hunters' horns far more interesting.

That Beethoven, however, could be an imitator too whenever he pleased, he gave triumphant proof in the *Battle of Vittoria*, a military symphony for two orchestras, performed in the great hall of the Vienna University in 1813. Of this piece the *Musical Gazette* of Leipzig, never an over-friendly critic, expressed itself as follows: "As to the sounds representing the shifting features of the battle, nothing can be more appropriate than the means employed by the author for the purpose. The effects, the illusions are all complete; we can assert, without reserve, that within the whole domain of imitative music there is no work that can be compared with this." In 1815 he reached the highest degree of personal glory when, by his dramatic cantata *Oh Glorious Moment!* he celebrated the victories of the Allies over Napoleon, in the presence of the sovereigns of Europe assembled at Vienna.

With regard to Beethoven's third manner, from 1815 to 1827, critics differ, some asserting he has fallen below himself, while others, though admitting much incomprehensibility, insist he has even surpassed himself by introducing a new idea, *poetry*, into music, before which the old forms of what is called absolute music must all yield in course of time. They point out, in particular, his *Choral Symphony*, his *Missa Solemnis* (Solemn Mass), some *Quartetts* for stringed instruments, and some *Variations* in a waltz, as partaking rather of the nature of inspiration than of ordinary human effort, and reaching the highest possible realms of the highest possible art. The *Missa Solemnis*, performed in one of the theatres of Vienna in 1822, in spite of some technical difficulties, had a splendid success, but it was painful to see the great master, nominally directing the musicians, but really so stone-deaf to everything going on around him that he had to be turned round by one of the singers so as to be made aware from the gesticulations of the audience of its delighted and enthusiastic approbation.

But it would be more painful, even if we had the space, to devote any attention to his numerous afflictions, his domestic troubles, his bitter disappointment in a graceless nephew, the son of a dead brother, whom he had educated at great expense

and trouble, his uncouth manners, his strange eccentricities, his roughness towards his best friends. Truly genius has its counterpoises. We pigmies need not grieve that we are not giants. "Great or little," as Goethe says, "all have to pay the scot of humanity."

A journey to Vienna, undertaken in cold wet weather, in company with his good-for-nothing nephew, at last gave his enfeebled constitution a blow from which he never recovered. On his death-bed the great *maestro* showed a most edifying piety, devoutly receiving the sacraments of the Church, and warmly reconciling himself with Hummel with whom he had for some time been at violent enmity.

We conclude with a hasty *resumé* from the pen of a competent appreciator of the great artist.

"Beethoven's compositions, 138 in number, comprise all the forms of vocal and instrumental music, from the sonata to the symphony, from the simple song to the opera and oratorio. In each of these forms he displayed the depth of his feeling, the power of his genius; in some of them he reached a greatness never approached by his predecessors or followers. His piano-forte sonatas have brought the technical resources of that instrument to a perfection previously unknown, but they at the same time embody an infinite variety and depth of emotion. His nine symphonies show a continuous climax of development, ascending from the simpler forms of Haydn and Mozart to the colossal dimensions of the *Choral Symphony*, which almost seem to surpass the possibilities of artistic expansion, and the subject of which is humanity itself with its sufferings and ideals. His dramatic works—the opera *Fidelio* and the overtures to *Egmont* and *Coriolanus*—display depth of pathos and force of dramatic characterization. Even his smallest songs and piano-forte pieces reflect a heart full of love and a mind bent on eternal thoughts and things."

Note 79 — COROT — page 138.

JEAN BAPTISTE CAMILLE COROT (1796-1875), landscape painter of peculiar originality, born in Paris, educated at Rouen,

stood behind a counter as dry-goods clerk till his twenty-sixth year, when, no longer able to resist the promptings of his genius, with his father's permission, he took some hasty lessons in the studios and then passed several delightful years in dreaming and thinking and working in Italy. His first works, a *Landscape near Narni* and the *Roman Campagna*, hailed by true artists with acknowledged delight, were totally neglected by the public. A modest inheritance, however, enabled him to work away in patience and love until the arrival of better days. They came at last, not until he had passed his sixtieth year. Then capricious fortune smiled, and orders came faster than he could fulfil them.

Such neglect is not surprising. His style, though highly original, possessed no quality to catch the vulgar eye. To be able to detect the eerie mysterious feeling of nature emanating from his landscapes, you should be almost as close and as loving an observer as himself. His canvases are anything but maps; they possess few of the topographic features that enable you to distinguish one scene from another. But you feel yourself in presence of a poet who sees more with the wistful eyes of his soul than with the material eyes of his body. He interprets the mystic senses of what he sees rather than their hard realities. His misty, silvery light, his calm, glimmering water, his shadowy trees, his vague foliage, his sleeping meadows, his unreal figures, suggest rather than describe, and gently start a dreamy, delightful reverie. He charms you into a soft enchantment as with sweet solemn music, and excites a certain sense of pleasure as with a faint perfume. To relish Corot thoroughly it is not enough to know him long; you must likewise have a kindred spirit, a soul rather disposed to sentiment and genial-pensive fancy rather than to substantiality and matter of fact. This is a simple reason why for nearly forty years Corot's name was hardly known outside the select few. It is to-day the fashion. For the last few years everybody affects to admire him, and would-be judges go into extasies over his worst daubs. For it cannot be denied there are Corots and Corots. Some, painted with care, love, conscientiousness — veritable gems —



are beyond all price. Others, dashed off in a hurry, careless, characterless, except that they bear a distant general resemblance—the “Corots of the auction rooms,” would not bring a penny but for their signature. The Parisian amateurs, in particular, highly appreciate his landscapes; they are to them magical transfers of what they can feast their eyes on every summer morning when they indulge in an early ramble through the woods or forests, the hills or vales, the parks or pleasure grounds that make up the peculiar scenery surrounding their gay capital in all directions.

No one loved the early morning more than Corot; the noon-day light he could not bear; when it came “there was nothing more to do,” as he says himself in a characteristic letter, an extract from which thoroughly reveals the man’s peculiar mode of regarding nature.

“A landscape painter’s day is a day of delight. He rises long before the sun, at three in the morning; seated under a tree, he watches and waits. At first there is little to be seen. Nature is nothing more than a white veil, on which some masses are vaguely sketched in profile. Everything smells sweet; everything trembles pleasantly under the dawn’s freshening breeze. *Bing!* The sun is coming! He reddens the gauzy veil, but he has not yet torn it away from meadow, valley, hill, and horizon. On the cold green grass, the nocturnal vapors, like silvery tufts, are still clinging. *Bing! Bing!* A ray of the sun!—Another ray! The small flowerets awake joyously; see them trembling under their diamond dew-drops. The chilly leaves begin to whisper under the air of the morning. Nothing as yet is seen, but it is all there. The landscape lies behind that semi-transparent gauze of quivering mist. Now the vaporous curtain, lifted by the sun, slowly rising, reveals the silver-striped river, the meadows, the cottages, the far receding distances. *Bang!* The sun has risen! You now realize everything you had been just imagining. *Bang!* There goes the peasant with his cart and oxen. *Ting-a-ling!* See the bell-wether leading his flock! *Bang!* Everything sparkles, shines, is full of light, soft light, light as yet sweet and caressing. The backgrounds

with their simple contour and harmonious tone are lost in the infinite sky through an atmosphere of azure and mist. The flowers lift up their heads ; the birds fly here and there. A rustic, mounted on a white horse, disappears on the narrowing path. The rounded willows are turning, like mill-wheels, on the river edge. And the artist, eagerly seizing his brushes, paints away — paints away ! Oh what a beautiful cow, chest-deep in the wet grass. Let me paint her ! *Crac !* There she is ! True to life ! A splendid likeness ! *Boum !* The sun is high. Everything feels warm and heavy and grave. The flowers hang their heads, the birds are silent, the village noises reach us. Heavy work is going on there. That's the blacksmith's hammer ringing on the anvil. *Boum !* It is time to go back. All is too visible. There is nothing now to do, except to take breakfast at the farm. A good slice of home-made bread, newly-churned butter, eggs, cream, ham. *Boum !* That's right, friends ! You work away ; I rest myself. I enjoy my siesta, and dream about my morning landscape. I dream my picture ; later I shall paint my dream."

Note 80 — **NORMAL SCHOOL** — page 142.

The *ECOLE NORMALE* of Paris, created by a decree of the Convention on the 9th Brumaire, year 3 (October 1, 1794), as a school to teach the art of teaching, was opened in the following year under such men as Lagrange, Laplace, but it was soon closed. Started again in 1808 by Napoleon, it opened in 1810 with 37 pupils, Cousin at the head of the list, and occupied at first the buildings of the suppressed Plessis College ; but in 1813 it was removed to the more spacious grounds of the Seminary *Saint Esprit*. Regarded for a few years by the Restoration with a somewhat favorable eye, towards 1820 it had made itself by its insubordination so obnoxious to the Royalists that in 1822, on the accession of the ultra Royalists to power, it was closed, and its 58 pupils dismissed. But, something of the kind being absolutely necessary, the Minister of Public Instruction opened it again in 1826 under the name of the *Preparatory Normal School*, with 19 pupils, increased in a few years to 49.

The government of July restored the old name, solidly assisted the institution with liberal endowments, and made important regulations for its management. From 1830 to 1845 for ten years under the direction of Cousin, the average number of pupils was 100. In 1846 it took possession of its present abode in the *Rue d'Ulm*, near *Sainte Geneviève*. The Revolution of 1848 was friendly to the *Ecole Normale*, but Fortoul, Minister of Public Instruction, being more desirous to obtain practical general teachers than mere one-sided scholars, suppressed the study of philosophy, and obliged the graduates to spend three additional years at practical work in the *Lyceums* (Higher Schools) before presenting themselves for permanent professorships. This measure proving too severe and being found to relax discipline, Rouland, Fortoul's successor, abolished the Lyceum novitiate, made Sainte-Beuve professor of French Literature, and raised the yearly budget of the *Ecole Normale* to sixty thousand dollars. In 1867, while Sainte-Beuve was defending "free thought" in the Senate, one of the pupils wrote an encouraging address, which appeared in the *Avenir National*. The writer being discovered and expelled, and the other pupils signifying their intention to quit the school with their companion, they were allowed to do so, and the school was temporarily closed. After vacation, however, it was opened again and the pupils reinstated, but with a changed administration.

The main function of the *Ecole Normale* is to form teachers for the public schools. Its pupils at present are more than 100; they are all called *bursars*, each holding a scholarship of about 200 dollars a year, which fully provides for their maintenance. The course is a three years' one, but a certain number of the best pupils are retained for a fourth and a fifth year; these, however, are lost to the public schools, being prepared for the posts of superior instruction, such as professorships in the *Faculties*. Generally the annual vacancies are from 30 to 40, for which the candidates sometimes amount to 500. To be allowed to compete, the youth must be a Frenchman or entitled to civil rights, over 18 years of age and under 24, must produce certificates of good conduct and freedom from bodily infirmity, must enter an

engagement to devote, if successful, at least 10 years to public instruction, and must have obtained the degree of bachelor of arts or bachelor of sciences, according to the section which he wishes to enter. He then undergoes a preliminary examination, which is held on the same day in each *academy*, or centre of every school district throughout France. This examination weeds the candidates; those that pass come up to Paris for a final examination, and those who do best in this final examination are admitted to the vacant scholarships. From this it is seen that Legouv   is perfectly right in calling the pupils "the *elite* of the students of the University;" and to what a degree of advancement they aim can be guessed from the fact that their first year's scientific course comprehends Differential and Integral Calculus. The Director-General, the Director of Literary Studies, the Director of Scientific Studies and the Professors (here called *ma  tres de conf  rence*), about 26 in all, keep the scholastic destination of their pupils constantly in view. The young men are, moreover, frequently drilled by actual practice in the Paris schools. At the end of three years, the successful student is at once made a professor or assistant professor, and his fortune is assured for life. His talents and successes are carefully taken into account; his advancement is gradual and certain; the highest honors are open to him, professorships of the Faculties, directorships of the great colleges, rectorships of the *Academies*, etc., with an assured pension on his retirement in old age.

A French professor, thus prepared and thus treated, has a far more satisfactory position than the school-teachers in England or America. Even the most successful of the latter have no career before them and no time for independent study. A French professor gives his three, four or five hours a day to his teaching or his conference, and then he is perfectly free. He has nothing to do with the discipline or the government. These are taken charge of by persons chosen for their aptitude for that peculiar kind of work. A man, wishing to follow a profession that keeps him in contact with intellectual studies and enables him to continue them, but who does not feel himself qualified



for the trying post of teacher, director, pastor and man of business, all in one, will hesitate before he opens a school in America, but he may very well become a professor in France. Accordingly, the service of public instruction in France attracts a far greater proportion of the intellectual force of the country than even in New England.

To become a teacher in France, however, other ways are open besides graduating in the *Ecole Normale*, which is fortunate, for, though it enjoys a great literary name in the world, few of its most distinguished alumni are real savants, most of them, Sarcey, About, Taine, etc., being journalists, essayists, politicians, *littérateurs*, everything, in fact, but teachers.

Note 81 — UNIVERSITY — page 142.

The UNIVERSITY OF FRANCE is, not a building nor a place of education of any kind, but an organization for public instruction extending all over the country and completely under the control of the government. Under that title, Napoleon I. established, in 1806, a great lay corporation, whose members, named by the government, had the exclusive right of controlling every branch of education throughout the whole extent of French territory. Instruction was to be of three kinds: *superior*, given by the *Faculties*; *secondary*, by the *Lycées* and the *Collèges*; and *primary*, by the common schools. No educational establishment should be permitted outside this *University* or without its authorization, except one or two great theological seminaries, and also a few religious corporations, where primary instruction was permitted.

Such, with a few modifications, is the *University of France* to-day. It is directed by the Minister of Public Instruction, assisted by two Superior Councils,—one of Public Instruction, one of Secondary Instruction, a consulting committee, and a body of twenty *Inspectors-General*. The whole country is divided into 15 educational districts, each having its head or centre, called an *Academy*, governed by a *Rector* and an *Academy Inspector*, each assisted by a Council. An *Academy* is not a teaching body; it is a responsible corporation whose business



it is to see that good methods and proper discipline are maintained in all the *Faculties*, the *Lycées* and the *Collèges* within its jurisdiction. An *Academy*, however, has no power over the *Primary Schools*; these are intrusted to the Prefect of the Department, who, as may be expected, generally watches the politics of the teacher more carefully than his capacity for instruction.

The Superior Council of Public Instruction, assisting the Minister, consists of 32 members, 8 of whom are churchmen; 3, senators; 3, councilors of state; 3, judges of the supreme court; 5, members of the Institute; 8, Inspectors-General; and 2, principals of private schools—all elected by their peers. Each *Academic Council* consists of 13 members: the Rector, 3 Academy Inspectors, 3 Deans of Faculties, 1 bishop, 2 clergymen of the recognized churches, 2 Deputies, and 2 citizens.

This monopoly of education by the state, having been combated for a long time by the clergy on the ground of its leading the youth of France into atheism, was at last,—mainly through the exertions of Archbishop Dupanloup and E. Laboulaye, the well-known friend of the United States,—in 1875, considerably modified by a law allowing higher education to be *free*. The consequence was the immediate founding of four free Catholic Universities, in Paris, Lille, Lyons, and Angers. In the Catholic University of Paris, erected at the expense of about 2 million francs, raised by voluntary subscription, law, science, and letters were taught last year to 163 pupils. The other universities are not so far advanced, but the religious portion of the French people expect great results from them, more than 5 million francs being already subscribed for the great establishment at Lille. The Radical party in the Chambers, not approving of free education, seem determined to withdraw from these universities the privilege of conferring degrees.

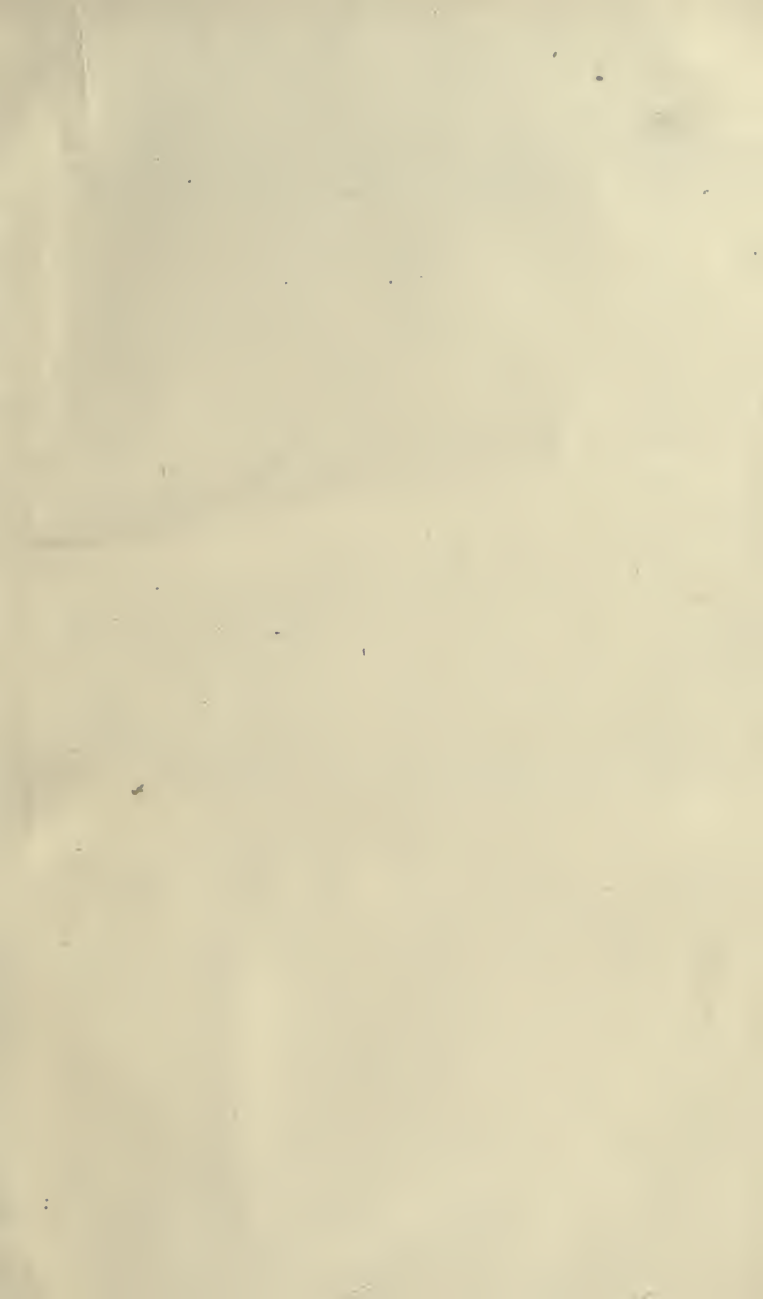
Note 82—FORTOUL—page 144.

HIPPOLYTE NICOLAS HONORÉ FORTOUL (1811-1856), archaeologist, novelist, educationalist, minister, and senator, having distinguished himself in his youth by several important histor-

ical and literary works, was appointed to the *Faculty* of Toulouse in 1840, where he delivered his course of French literature with great success. Sent to Aix, in 1846, as Dean of the Faculty, he remained there for two years; when elected to the National Assembly in 1848 he attracted the attention of Louis Napoleon, who admired him so much that after the *coup d'état*, he made him Minister of Public Instruction, a post which he retained till his death four years later. Conscious of serious deficiencies in the *University* system, Fortoul endeavored to remedy some of them by rendering the study of science and literature, to a certain point, equally obligatory on all, so that a literature pupil should not remain ignorant of the elements of science and, on the other hand, a science pupil should not leave the lyceum without having acquired some solid historical and literary knowledge. His new regulations for this purpose, hailed with delight by some, were denounced by others as impracticable. His sudden death by apoplexy, however, left the problem unsolved. Fortoul's plans never had a fair opportunity of being tested by actual experience; their short-comings alone were seen; their excellences had not time to develop themselves. Still the patient and courageous efforts expended by this sincere and enlightened minister in the difficult task of securing the blessings of real education for France have not been altogether useless. Drawing is now generally obligatory, and the studies of science and literature keep together for a few years.

Fortoul's literary works are characterized by erudition and elegance; his last, *Art in Germany*, is perhaps his best. A laudable enterprise, started during his ministry, *A Complete Collection of the Popular Songs of France*, had made some progress before it was interrupted by his premature death.

THE END.









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